July 2, 2019

RE: An Act Relative to Affordable and Accessible High Quality Early Education and Care (H.470 and S.288)

Dear Chairs Lewis and Peisch, Vice Chairs Lovely and Tucker, and Members of the Joint Committee on Education:

We, the undersigned organizations, recognize that in order to meet the needs of the 21st-century workforce and strengthen our economy in a way that also reduces racial, gender, and income inequality in our state, Massachusetts families need affordable, accessible, high-quality early education and child care.

While Massachusetts is a nationwide leader on quality in early education and care, the current system is unaffordable and/or inaccessible for many families.

We support, and are working together to develop the details of, a plan that would give Massachusetts families access to affordable, high-quality early education and child care delivered through programs at centers, homes and public schools.

Some ideas we are considering include the following:

- Extended hours that go beyond the traditional work day;
- A sliding-fee scale where families below a certain percentage of the poverty line would be able to access child care options without paying anything, while families with higher incomes would pay a progressive sliding-scale tuition fee based on their income, with no family paying more than a set percent of their income; and
- Ensuring that early educators are fairly compensated and properly trained to reduce turnover, secure a high-quality workforce, and attain an adequate supply of child care to meet the need.

We are a diverse set of groups including community, faith-based, labor, and business organizations, as well as early educators, parents, networks, and direct service organizations. We are working together to develop the details of a plan we can all support. In the meantime, we have filed placeholder legislation, H.470 (Representative Gordon) and S.288 (Senator Friedman), titled “An Act Relative to Affordable and Accessible High Quality Early Education and Care.”
We look forward to working with members of the Committee as we develop the details of this plan.

Sincerely,

Jesse Mermell, President
Alliance for Business Leadership

Peter Doliber, Executive Director
Alliance of Massachusetts YMCAs

Boston Democratic Socialists of America

Ana Poblacion, Research Scientist
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Deb Fastino, Executive Director
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Cindy Rowe, Executive Director
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Rachael Collins
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Sasha Goodfriend, President
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Jeff McLynch, Director
Massachusetts Coalition for Adult Education

Jill Ashton, Executive Director
Massachusetts Commission on the Status of Women

Lew Finfer, Co-Director
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Michelle Haimowitz, Executive Director
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Georgia Katsoulomitis, Executive Director
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**New England Women’s Policy Initiative**

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