



December 15, 2021

Senator Dianne Feinstein
Senator Alex Padilla
Representative Barbara Lee
Representative Eric Swalwell
Representative Ro Khanna

Re: Support Build Back Better

Dear Alameda County Delegation,

First 5 Alameda County urges Congress to act swiftly and support a comprehensive Build Back Better Act that includes historic investments in early care and education, paid family and medical leave, the expanded Child Tax Credit, affordable housing, birthing justice, and additional support for families and communities. All provisions of the Build Back Better Act should be sufficiently funded to address long standing structural inequities and ensure babies and families receive the support they need.

Our mission at First 5 is to build a local responsive early childhood system in support of young children and their families and caregivers. Science tells us that deprivation in the early years has long-term consequences for each child and our society. There is and will remain a direct link between early childhood development, community and family conditions, and our county's stability and prosperity. California's Master Plan for Early Learning and Care recognizes paid leave as a critical support to families with young children and a core element of the child care system. In my own life as a mother with a young child, I have personally felt the impact of paid leave in my own family and on my career.

Please consider the needs of families and caregivers, and the underlying structural inequities they represent, in Alameda County, the seventh most populous county in the state, as you consider support for the Build Back Better bill:

- Over [48,000 children 0-5 in Alameda County live below 85%](#) of the state median income, a rough estimate for eligibility for subsidized child care.
- [17,604 children utilized subsidized child care](#) in Alameda County in 2018, the majority of whom were ages 3-5.
- There is a significant gap in access to subsidies for income-eligible families- with an [unmet need of 91% of eligible infants and 46% of eligible preschool children](#).



- 87% of Alameda County ECE professionals, most of whom are women of color, are considered very low-income for the County. 50% of ECE professionals earn \$18 or less per hour.
- Child care providers were hard hit by the pandemic. We estimate **that the Alameda County ECE field lost \$395 million in FY2020-21 alone** (\$220 million without taking the increased cost of providing care into consideration) and continues to experience losses in the current fiscal year.

We are grateful for your continued leadership and support for children, families, and communities. Build Back Better will be a historic step towards building a strong foundation for today's children and our country's future. We ask for your continued support of the House-version of the Build Back Better Act.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kristin Spanos".

Kristin Spanos
Chief Executive Officer
First 5 Alameda County