



July 28, 2022

Senator Steve Glazer
Senator Nancy Skinner
Senator Bob Wieckowski
Assemblymember Buffy Wicks
Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan
Assemblymember Mia Bonta
Assemblymember Bill Quirk
Assemblymember Alex Lee

RE: SUPPORT CALIFORNIANS DURING ONGOING PANDEMIC AND HOUSING CRISIS

Dear Members of the Alameda County Delegation to the California State Legislature,

First 5 Alameda is committed to advocating for and achieving equity, with a focus on racial and economic justice, to ensure that all children in Alameda County are born healthy and can achieve their full potential. In partnership with the community, we support a countywide continuous prevention and early intervention system that promotes optimal health and development, narrows disparities, and improves the lives of children birth to age 5 and their families. **We are writing to ask for your continued commitment in advocating for policies that support families through the ongoing pandemic and housing crisis by:**

- 1) **Increasing paid family leave (PFL) and state disability insurance (SDI) payment rates** to allow more Californians to take time away from work to care for a new child, a family member, or their health;
 - Approximately 1 in 10 children under 6 lives below the federal poverty line. PFL and SDI are a critical safety net that is intended to ensure that Californians are able to recover from a serious illness, bond with a new child or care for a seriously ill family member and still meet their financial obligations. However, because PFL and SDI provide only 60% of most workers' wages, they remain out of reach for many Californians.

- 2) **Extending COVID Supplemental Paid Sick Leave** to support California workers as our state faces yet another surge of illness; and
 - This has significant impacts on the early care and education field, and the families served by these providers. Our 2021/22 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment found that early care and education professionals experienced drastic changes to their hours and income during COVID-19: 49% reported decreased hours, 43% decreased wages, and 57% decreased household income.



3) **Streamline the construction of affordable housing.**

- 50% of renters in Alameda County pay more than one-third of their income for rent. For families of young children, the cost of child care creates an additional financial burden and contribute to financial instability. See more in our [Data for Action](#) guide.

Our mission at First 5 Alameda County is to continually invest and innovate to support young children and their families and caregivers. Healthy thriving communities are crucial for developing young minds and family well-being. Findings from our 2021/22 Kindergarten Readiness Assessment, a participatory research project that **surveyed over 3000 parents/caregivers, early care and education professionals, TK and Kindergarten teachers in Alameda County**, show that *family health & well-being and access to basic needs are associated with school readiness*. Now is the time to support policies that increase access to sufficient income and supports so families can meet their basic needs for housing, food, utilities, diapers, and resources required to create a safe healthy, and enriching home environment.

We are grateful for your continued leadership and support for children, families, and communities. We ask for your continued support in advocating for equitable paid family leave and state disability insurance payment rates; extended COVID supplemental paid sick leave; and increased access to affordable housing.

Sincerely,

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

Kristin Spanos
Chief Executive Officer
First 5 Alameda County