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## Senate of Pennsylvania

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August 31, 2020

Governor Tom Wolf  
Office of the Governor  
508 Main Capitol Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

RE: Urgent Intervention Needed to Delay OCDEL Child Care Provider Subsidy Recalculation

Dear Governor Wolf :

I know that early childhood education and investment in Pennsylvania's child care providers is a top priority for you, as it is for me. Not surprisingly during the COVID crisis, as workers have been laid off or sent home to telework, as nonessential businesses have closed, and as families scrambled to educate their school aged children remotely, child care providers in my district in Bucks and Montgomery counties have taken massive hits and are in the very early phases of rebuilding. Montgomery County providers have reported that their enrollment is about 40% what it was pre-COVID.

Over the course of the COVID-19 crisis, the Office of Child Development and Early Learning (OCDEL) has been making child care subsidy payments – which subsidize some or all of the child care costs for children based on family income and upon which families and providers depend -- based on the provider's pre-COVID enrollment in March 2020. **Effective Sept. 1, OCDEL plans to return to pre-COVID procedures and resume calculating providers' payments based on actual attendance. This will significantly cut providers' revenue at the worst possible time ("back to school" season) and while they are still operating at significant deficits. Child care providers support our families, businesses, and are a critical component to our economic recovery, and we must do everything within our power to keep them afloat. That is why I strongly urge you to intervene and delay this potentially disastrous move.**

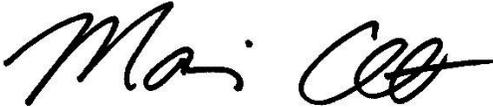
If this cannot be done, we need to take a much closer look at the current investment of CARES dollars in early childhood education and whether it is getting to child care providers in the most efficient way. As an example, the Hazard Pay Grant program, for which I stood beside you in strong support, has turned out to, in practice, present practical barriers for child care provider awardees.

Because of the requirement that they “front” the awarded funds and submit for reimbursement at the end of the three month period, many of the smaller grantee businesses, such as the child care providers like Jolly Toddler in Southampton who brought this issue to my attention, have been told by DCED that their only option, if they can’t afford to “front” the money, is to decline the grant. The advantage of working with OCDEL and urging them to continue a policy modification that is already in place and getting money into the hands of child care providers is that it has been tested and proven successful.

Whatever we do, we need to acknowledge that Pennsylvania as a whole cannot rebuild without an intact network of licensed child care providers. We’ve been saying for years that we need *even more* quality child care providers in Pennsylvania. We certainly can’t afford to lose the ones we have now.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this urgent issue. I would welcome the opportunity to discuss it with you in more detail and assist you in any way I can.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Maria Collett". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Maria" and the last name "Collett" clearly distinguishable.

Senator Maria Collett

CC: Secretary Theresa Miller, Department of Health and Human Services  
Secretary Pedro Rivera, Department of Education