



# Opening Statement

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION & LABOR

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The Hon. Robert C. "Bobby" Scott • Chairman

**Opening Statement of Chairman Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan (CNMI)**  
Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education Hearing  
*Solving America's Child Care Crisis: Supporting Parents, Children, and the Economy*  
2175 Rayburn House Office Building  
Thursday, February 6, 2020 | 10:15am

Good Morning! The cost of child care in America has gone up 2,000 percent in the last 40 years. 2,000 percent! The average cost of full-time child care is now \$16,000 per year. That is about half the median income for a single parent. Almost the same as the average annual cost of in-state tuition at a public university. Across America, working parents are struggling to make sure their young children have decent, high-quality child care — at an affordable price. So, this morning, we are here to find out how the federal government can better support families around the country find and afford high-quality child care.

It is also important to remember that this is not just a problem for young families raising children. There is a larger social and economic impact on all of us, when our youngest children do not get the care they need. It is now well-established the first five years of life are critical for cognitive and intellectual development — particularly, the development of language.

More than that, the first five years are when socio-emotional skills develop. I wish I had early child care when I was 5 years old. Self-control, persistence, and the ability to cooperate with others begin to develop in early childhood. If we fail to invest in those early years, we all pay the price later in higher incarceration rates, poor health, and reduced performance in school and the workplace.

On the other hand, educating our children in their earliest years is recognized as having among the highest returns on investment of public funds. Every dollar spent on early childhood education results in eight dollars of social benefits, according to a 2015 report from the President's Council of Economic Advisers. That benefit is mostly in the form of increased earnings, when those children we invest in, go to work.

But we would also see the benefit today: Our economy loses \$57 billion each year because American workers miss time at work or leave the workforce when they cannot find or afford child care. We can avoid that present cost and see economic benefits in the future, if we are willing to go to work in this subcommittee to address the need for early childhood education and face the crisis in child care.

We do have a proposal on the table: It is called the *Child Care for Working Families Act*. It supports families by capping how much they pay for child care and invests in the child care workforce; so, the people who care for our children are finally recognized as the teachers they truly are. And I am sure there is more we could do.

So, I look forward to hearing the ideas of our witnesses today. I now recognize the Ranking Member, Mr. Allen, for his opening statement.