



Notes: StateFedConnect Peer-to-Peer Zoom Call

September 6, 2022

Facilitator Reg Leichthy (Foresight Law + Policy)

Please note that our next call is scheduled for October 4 at 3:00 PM ET

What Advocates Can Do Summary

On Healthy Meals, Healthy Kids Act:

- The [Food Research and Action Center](#) has templates to send letters to the House to [advocate for the Healthy Meals, Healthy Kids Act](#) and another template to [reach out to the Senate](#) to try to move them forward on child nutrition as well.
- Staff outreach template letter from Mary Beth Testa should you want to connect with staffers about the Healthy Meals, Healthy Kids Act (attached).

On Scott-Burr bill and prioritizing child care funding:

- Engage with lawmakers on both sides of the aisle about the relief funding cliff that is approaching, remind members that much of the COVID-19 federal relief funding had bipartisan support and prioritized child care, and share with them what states have accomplished with this funding and what will happen when funding runs out.
- Check the list of Burr-Scott sponsors ([here](#)) and if your Republican Senator has yet to sign on, you can choose to connect with their staff. With Democratic Senators and House members you may want to ask for commitments towards bipartisan solutions and keep pressure on them so that they know that the child care crisis isn't going away.
- Another way to reach out is to connect with retiring members of Congress or those up for re-election and ask them to talk with Sen. McConnell about child care.

On MIECHV Program expiration:

- Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV) program [Social Media Toolkit](#) (tag [@hvworks](#)) to bring attention to expiration of MIECHV's reauthorization on September 30.

Welcome

- **Why we're here** - To connect state advocates with each other and engage with partners at the federal level. We hope to create a communication loop to share expertise from the state level to the federal level as well as help state advocates to create relationships and connections around federal policy.
- **A new approach to the agenda and what's on today's agenda** – As we shared last month, we are trying out a new structure for the StateFedConnect calls that includes a federal overview, a deeper dive into: what's coming down the pike (today we will discuss the Healthy Meals, Healthy Kids Act), a hot topic (today it will be appropriations and the commitment to early

childhood), and an “outside-in” conversation where state advocates can bring up what is front of mind for them (today we’ll discuss the Scott-Burr and Murray-Kaine proposals). We will then close with a high note -- something positive that happened in federal advocacy that felt like a win. Moving forward, we hope advocates volunteer to share those high notes, whether it’s a new strategy that you feel good about or a step forward on a policy win. Please email your high notes to mableidinger@earlysucccess.org and/or Elliot.Regenstein@flpadvisors.com, and we’ll reach out!

Federal Overview

(Reg Leichty, Founding Partner, Foresight Law + Policy)

Following the August recess, Congress returned to Washington today with a busy calendar and only approximately 20 legislative days between now and the mid-term elections. Prior to October 1, Congress must pass a temporary funding bill (“continuing resolution”) to avoid a government shutdown. The CR will fund government operations at fiscal year 2022 levels for a specific period of time (likely till December 9 or 16) to provide additional time for Congress to agree on the fiscal year 2023 budget. It is possible that Congress will agree to add on additional emergency spending and high priority policy changes to this must-pass legislation, which could include codifying same sex marriage rights (which passed the House over the summer, and Sen. Collins has called for it to be a priority before the November elections occur). Supplemental emergency funding under consideration includes emergency natural disaster relief (especially for recently flooded communities and areas of the far west that have experienced extreme droughts) as well as Ukrainian war aid. The House Ed & Labor Committee has slated several hearings this month that include discussions focused on juvenile justice programs, the working conditions of child farm workers, and maybe a hearing focused on school district and state education agency efforts to use ESSER funds to promote learning recovery. The Senate HELP committee has not yet posted any September hearings.

What’s Next: Federal Child Nutrition Programs (Healthy Meals, Healthy Kids Act)

(Mary Beth Testa, MBST Solutions)

There are two ways to help with child hunger at the federal level currently – renewing the Healthy Meals, Healthy Kids Act and the Farm Bill (though it is not due for reauthorization until 2023, work is beginning).

At the end of July, the House Ed & Labor Committee passed the Healthy Meals, Healthy Kids Act which includes positive impacts for school breakfast, school lunch, WIC, and other child and adult nutrition programs. The committee bill addresses rate increases and fairness as well. The bill includes a very meaningful and tangible opportunity for children, and we hope House leaders will provide floor time for the bill to be considered this year. The Senate Agriculture Committee (the committee of jurisdiction on the Senate side), led by Senator Debbie Stabenow (D-MI) would also like to move a companion nutrition bill. Advocates can consider urging their senators to contact Sen. Stabenow (if your Senator is a Democrat) or Ranking Member Boozman (R-MT) (if your Senator is a Republican) and share their support for the Healthy Meals, Healthy Kids Act. This step could help to prompt the Senate to move forward before the end of 2022. If the current Congress adjourns without acting on the bill, then the new Congress (convening for the first time in January) will have to start the process over.

Discussion:

- **Is there anything in the Healthy Meals, Healthy Kids Act that reduces paperwork burdens on providers?** Mary Beth noted the House bill includes a plan to create an Advisory Committee on this issue, but the committee has not made other plans to address administrative burden.

What Advocates Can Do Now:

- The [Food Research and Action Center](#) has templates to send letters to the House to [advocate for the Healthy Meals, Healthy Kids Act](#) and another template to [reach out to the Senate](#) to try to move them forward on child nutrition as well.
- Staff outreach template letter from Mary Beth Testa should you want to connect with staffers about the Healthy Meals, Healthy Kids Act (attached).

Resources: Below is a comparison guide between the Child Nutrition Act and the Farm Bill

Federal legislative opportunities to address child hunger, child nutrition

Child Nutrition Act

- To be reauthorized every 5 years
 - Last reauthorized in 2010
 - Due for reauthorization since 2015
- House Education & Labor Committee
- Senate Agriculture Committee
- Mostly mandatory/entitlement \$\$
- Includes school breakfast and lunch, summer nutrition, WIC, CACFP
- Historically bipartisan

Farm Bill

- To be reauthorized every 5 years
 - Last reauthorized in 2018
 - Due for reauthorization in 2023
- House Agriculture Committee
- Senate Agriculture Committee
- Requires Appropriations \$\$
- Includes SNAP
- Historically bipartisan except for SNAP section which is historically partisan

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Hot Topic: Appropriations and the commitment to early childhood

Sarah Rubinfield (Director of Government Affairs, First Five Years Fund)

Child Care Development Block Grant

As we look to the fall, though the passage of reconciliation without child care was very disappointing, we aren't starting again from scratch. The momentum that has been built and the attention we have drawn on child care challenges is really making an impact! In our favor are a strong bipartisan foundation (every COVID-19 funding package prioritized child care funding – even in March on the HELP Committee every Senator on both sides of the aisle talked about the importance of child care). You have all made an impact and we are seeing it publicly. There is a lot we can build on as we have a strong majority of Democratic support for child care and the President supports it. Senators Schumer and Murray as well as others have taken the Senate floor and committed to identifying a solution to the child care crisis. We need to figure out the best way to pull all of this support together to build a foundation and push forward. On the Republican side, the Scott-Burr bill earlier this year to reauthorize the Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) now has 13 Republican Senators (Sen. Fischer was just added this week). There are several Republican supporters of child care that are not yet cosponsors. There were several appropriations letters this year supporting child care including a new one from five Republican Senators on the doubling of CCDBG over five years. The child care crisis is not over and we need

lawmakers to use bipartisan support to advance solutions. Ways to do this include: engaging with lawmakers on both sides of the aisle about the relief funding cliff that is approaching, reminding members that much of the COVID-19 federal relief funding had bipartisan support and prioritized child care, and sharing with them what states have accomplished with this funding and what will happen when funding runs out.

Appropriations

As mentioned, Congress must pass a continuing resolution by the end of the month to ensure federal operations continue beginning on October 1. The CR will likely run until December 9th or 16th which provides a three-month window to push for as much child care funding as possible. It is important to leverage the bipartisan support and ask Republican members to support the Scott-Burr bill, noting that the child care crisis is not solved and will get worse when funding runs out. Push them to find a solution together. Congress is expected to have quite a bit of activity during the lame duck session (following the elections) which will most likely include an end-of-year package to lump all must-do items together.

What Advocates Can Do Now:

- Engage with lawmakers on both sides of the aisle about the relief funding cliff that is approaching, remind members that much of the COVID-19 federal relief funding had bipartisan support and prioritized child care, and share with them what states have accomplished with this funding and what will happen when funding runs out.
- Ask Republican members to support the [Scott-Burr](#) bill.

Resources:

- [FFYF's round up of FY23 appropriations letters.](#)
- [FFYF's statement on Scott-Burr bill.](#)

"Outside In" conversation: Scott-Burr and Murray-Kaine bills

Ben Gies (Director, Early Childhood Policy and Practice, The Prichard Committee)

Echoing Sarah's comments, not all hope is lost! The Scott-Burr CCDBG bill as well as the two resources shared in advance of the call (below) include a lot of overlap with room to move forward. A coalition of non-profit entities from KY is having a discussion with Sen. McConnell's staff this week to raise awareness of the Scott-Burr legislation and share positive things in the bill (as well as a reminder that the funding is lacking) and ask him to sign onto the bill as several other Republican colleagues have done. Sen. McConnell's push for funding likely won't be enough, but it might push Republicans to jump in and help get Murray, Kaine, Scott, and Burr in a room together to look for a compromise or collaboration as well as a request for more funding. Ramping up over a few years to \$12-\$18 billion in mandatory annual appropriations is what we have been told may be a possibility (current spending is \$6 billion per year).

Sarah Rubinfield noted that when we step back and look at the bipartisan things that have happened in the last year or two (both big and small), we should be asking: why not child care now?

Discussion:

Scott-Burr bill – though there wasn't funding included, the language was good, correct? Sarah: yes – the broad takeaway was yes on the policy side. On the funding side, it is an authorizing bill, so it says "such sums" rather than a specific number. We have been clear that funding is a necessary part of the conversation. Can this lead to a commitment to increased funding over a certain number of years?

Between mandatory and discretionary, we have a few opportunities for increasing funding and should try to show strong bipartisan support and keep members on the record as much as we can. We want lawmakers to come to the table and find a solution together.

We have used so much of the federal COVID-19 relief funding and some of the investments we have made are permanent. Do you have any comparison on the \$12-18 billion when looking at what has previously been given to states for child care throughout the COVID-19 packages? Is this enough to sustain child care or is this in essence a step backward with regard to funding? Sarah: there may not be a huge increase in mandatory funding, but we are trying to stress that a few hundred million or any smaller amount will still make a huge impact and try to push for that investment. There was a \$150 million funding increase in mandatory spending in ARPA, but we would stress that the child care cliff is coming and making a small increase in mandatory funding with a commitment to additional funding would be incredibly helpful. Lawmakers need to understand that it doesn't have to be \$400 million or nothing anymore – it can be any amount and still be very impactful. Given the CCDBG proposals to double or triple funding, if the lawmakers worked together maybe we could get double or triple funding over five years – the \$18 billion proposal.

With Burr's retirement this year, do you think there's a chance passage of this could be a legacy issue for him? Sarah: We are in a good position to have the Chair and Ranking Member of the Senate HELP Committee very supportive of early learning. Both of those positions will likely change next Congress with Bernie Sanders and Rand Paul as possible new leaders in that committee.

A reminder that we want to ensure StateFedConnect is a two-way communication loop – so if you have intel on state work and members of congress because you met with them, you saw their press release, read an article, etc. about their work please share that with us.

What Advocates Can Do Now:

- Check the list of Burr-Scott sponsors ([here](#)) and if your Republican Senator has yet to sign on, you can choose to connect with their staff. With Democratic Senators and House members you may want to ask for commitments towards bipartisan solutions and keep pressure on them so that they know that the child care crisis isn't going away.
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Resources:

- FFYF [side-by-side](#) comparison of current CCDBG law and the Scott-Burr proposal
- Elliot Haspel [editorial](#) "A Bipartisan Path Forward for Child Care"

End on a High Note

Dr. Tiffany Tyler-Garner (Executive Director, Children's Advocacy Alliance of Nevada)

Though child care was not included in the most recent funding, thank you for all your work! In the last 21 days, our Congressman (Horsford) and Speaker Pelosi convened at a Head Start Center to talk about IRA and early learning and pre-k. A delegation went to the Hunt Institute Summit. A legislator committed to sponsoring legislation for universal pre-k. Our governor affirmed child care support and \$50 million in ARPA funding. We are thankful for the momentum happening around this issue – the subsidy eligibility is up in our state. Building capacity for providers, increases in subsidy to 95% of

market rate (a 21% increase after years of flat or disinvestment) – all of this is happening in the largest county on our state where 7 out of 10 job salaries wouldn't even allow a person to rent a studio apartment. Even though you may feel it was lost because we didn't get funding included, your years of advocacy and the advocacy of the last few months have made a difference. People are on notice that we are watching and the needs are great and we expect the efforts to be sustained. There is a need to build capacity and ensure state level investments continue. So many children in Nevada are in a slightly better place because parents don't have to choose between the need to go to work to keep a roof over their heads or to ensure their children are cared for. Thank you for what you are doing nationally and in the states to create change for children as a result of your work.

Resources:

- [Temporary funds boost Nevada child care sector, but what will last?](#)
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Additional Resources

- **What is the likelihood that the Senate takes up the Pregnant Workers Fairness Act?** The House passed it and we think it has enough votes in the Senate to pass, but Sen. Schumer has not taken it up for a vote yet. Here are some additional resources on PWFA. It has passed House and Senate HELP. Final passage is still pending. <https://www.abetterbalance.org/our-issues/pregnant-workers-fairness/>
- Maternal, Infant, and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program (MIECHV) program [Social Media Toolkit](#) (tag [@hvworks](#)) to bring attention to expiration of MIECHV's reauthorization on September 30.