May 26, 2016

Dear Representative,

On behalf of the more than 170,000 bipartisan members and supporters, over 1,000 branches, and 800 college and university partners, of the American Association of University Women (AAUW), I urge you to cosponsor the Child Care Access Means Parents in School Reauthorization Act (H.R. 4681) which was introduced by Representatives Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) and Katherine Clark (D-MA).

Workforce changes over the century have resulted in higher education becoming less of a luxury and more of a necessity. At current rates, the U.S. will add over 16 million jobs by the year 2020 that require at least some postsecondary education. But many students still struggle to make ends meet, especially those who are parenting while pursuing their educations. A critical resource to many student parents is the Child Care Access Means Parents in School (CCAMPIS) program, which supports campus-based child care services. The Child Care Access Means Parents in School Reauthorization Act (H.R. 4681) would reauthorize and update the CCAMPIS program so that it can continue to support parenting students as they pursue higher education.

As AAUW’s research explains, women make up the majority of students in all sectors of higher education. For example, more than 4 million women attend community colleges, which is more than the number of undergraduate women attending either public or private not-for-profit, four-year institutions. These 4 million women include more than 1 million mothers, of whom half are married and half are unmarried. Overall, the number of unmarried or single parents among undergraduate students has nearly doubled in the last 20 years.

Often lost in the conversation about affordable higher education are the other costs incurred by students during their time in school. With more and more individuals enrolling at various stages of their careers and lives, AAUW believes it is imperative to take a bigger picture look at affordability. Research has found that in most states, average child care center fees for an infant are higher than a year’s tuition and fees at a public college. Costs for child care put it out of reach for most student parents, making affordable on-campus child care a necessary student support. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, less than half of the more than 1,000 community colleges in the United States offer on-campus child care for students.

The CCAMPIS Reauthorization Act would reauthorize the CCAMPIS program and require the Department of Education to work with stakeholders to strengthen oversight and data collection. In addition it would direct the Department of Education to establish a plan for how to better serve and support the unique needs of the 4.8 million student parents in the U.S.

I urge you to cosponsor the Child Care Access Means Parents in School Reauthorization Act (H.R. 4681). To do so, please contact Virginia Hayes in Rep. Duckworth’s office at Virginia.Hayes@mail.house.gov. If you have any questions or need additional information, feel free to contact me at 202/785-7720, or Anne Hedgepeth, government relations manager, at 202/785-7724.
Sincerely,

Lisa M. Maatz
Vice President of Government Relations

4 AAUW. (2014). Child Care on Campus: A Must for Mothers in College. www.aauw.org/2014/05/06/child-care-on-cc-campus/