



MEDIA STATEMENT

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DC COUNCIL'S VOTE EXPANDS CHILD CARE AFFORDABILITY, BUT FAILS TO FULLY FUND EARLY CHILDHOOD WORKFORCE COMPENSATION

WASHINGTON, DC (May 16, 2023)—Today, the DC Council held its first vote on the 2024 fiscal year budget. They followed through with the Bowser administration's proposal to make child care more affordable by expanding eligibility. Still, they did not restore \$4.4 million to the Early Childhood Pay Equity Fund or add \$700,000 to the DC Health's Home Visiting Programs.

Increasing the income limit to make an additional 2,100 District families eligible for child care assistance is one way to help everyday Washingtonians recover from the pandemic. However, they also need a thriving child care sector—with fairly compensated teachers—to work and fairly compensated home visitors to help them pivot and create solid family structures in DC's new economic reality.

"Under 3 DC thanks Mayor Bowser and the DC Council for making child care more affordable for families in this budget, but when it comes to fully compensating the workforce behind early childhood, they missed the mark. As we move forward in the budget process, we must keep fighting for full funding for early childhood educators and home visitor compensation. We all know that child care is the work that makes all other work possible, and we hope the DC Council will get this right before the budget process is complete," stated Kimberly Perry, executive director at DC Action and co-chair of Under 3 DC.

Under 3 DC understands that many agencies and initiatives have received budget cuts during this budget season. We were championing Councilmember Zachary Parker's amendment that would have restored the \$4.4 million to the Pay Equity Fund and funded additional better life programs to make critical short- and long-term investments in District children and families. We are disappointed that he had to remove it from consideration.

The DC early learning community will continue to push for the complete restoration of the Pay Equity Fund cuts and more funding for Home Visiting ahead of the second budget vote on May 30. For the District to thrive, it must have an accessible, comprehensive, and equitable early childhood system.

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Under 3 DC harnesses the voices and power of District families with young children, early educators, health professionals and community-based organizations to shine a spotlight on the need for more public investments in early education and health programs for infants and toddlers. Together, we can set the District of Columbia on a path to creating and sustaining a high-quality, equitable early childhood system.