



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Susan Serino

SERINO JOINS BIPARTISAN GROUP OF LAWMAKERS AND ADVOCATES TO CALL FOR EFFECTIVE ALLOCATION OF CHILDCARE FUNDING

SUSAN SERINO February 23, 2021

| ISSUE: **CHILDCARE FUNDING**



ALBANY, NY –Senator Sue Serino today was part of a bipartisan group of lawmakers who joined childcare advocates in calling for the Governor to release the \$469 million in childcare funding awarded to the State under the federal Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA). This funding was provided in December 2020 and came in addition to the \$169 million New York received for childcare under the CARES Act, of which the state has only spent \$41 million.

A virtual press conference was held in support of the initiative by Chair of the State Assembly's Children and Families Committee, Assemblyman Andrew Hevesi. While Senator Serino could not attend the event, she made her support for the push clear saying, *"As a former childcare provider myself, and as someone who spent a portion of my life as a working, single mom, I understand first-hand how challenging it can be to access and afford quality childcare. We have a major opportunity before us to utilize these funds to fix critical flaws, greatly expand access to childcare and ensure providers have an opportunity to better utilize resources. In order to get parents back into the workforce, we have to act swiftly to make this a top priority, and I am proud to join together with the bipartisan coalition that is working together to help give childcare access the attention it deserves."*

New York State's official spending plan for its CAA childcare funding must be submitted to the federal government by this Thursday, February 25, 2021, and the group is calling for the following recommendations to be made:

- Support families receiving childcare subsidies and stabilize providers through the existing subsidy system;
- Offer stabilization grants and other relief to keep childcare providers operational;
- Grant the majority of funds to the state's 58 social services districts, relying upon the existing childcare subsidy structure to administer funds;
- Provide financial support for the hiring of employees and acquisition of resources to ensure a smooth release of this funding; and
- Gather input from a group of representative stakeholders, including Child Care Resource & Referral (CCR&R) providers, providers representing all childcare modalities, union representatives, and parent representatives, prior to the rollout of programs, in order to provide problem-solving opportunities and ensure programs run as intended.

The January 2021 Data Book from the Schuyler Center for Analysis and Advocacy reported that on average, childcare providers have been operating on only a 40% capacity on average since March, and more than 60% are losing money each month. Without providing the critical funding that New York has already been awarded, providers will be forced to permanently close, further exasperating a childcare shortage at a time when the state should be focusing squarely on increasing access to affordable slots.

Recognizing the key role access to childcare plays in keeping parents—especially women—in the workforce, Senator Serino has made increasing access to quality, affordable childcare a top priority. In 2020, Senator had introduced the ‘COVID-19 Family Relief Act,’ aiming to provide families in need of childcare with direct support and providers with the resources they need to expand available slots. The necessary funding for this legislation would come from the unused CARES Act funding.