

# Press Release...



FROM THE OFFICE OF STATE REPRESENTATIVE LA SHAWN K. FORD

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**For More Information:**  
773-750-0866  
RepFord@LaShawnFord.com

## FORD CALLS FOR EQUALITY IN TEACHER PAY

**CHICAGO-** State Representative La Shawn K. Ford (D-CH), applauds Governor Pritzker for signing HB2078 into law. HB2078 will increase the minimum salary for teachers over the next four years, reaching \$40,000 by the 2023-2024 school year. Ford, who showed heavy support for the new law in the beginning, was also a sponsor who voted for HB2078. Ford believes the passage of this bill into law sends a message that Illinois demands better for educators in Illinois.

“I was proud to support the passage of the bill to increase teachers’ pay,” said Ford. “I recognize and applaud the efforts that the current administration is making toward teacher and parental support. The announcement of recent wage raises for Illinois teachers from \$32,076 to \$40,000 and an automatic annual salary increase, in alignment with the consumer price index, is outstanding news!”

Ford does not want people to ignore the fact that community-based organizations that pipeline their students into schools have an abysmal lack of resources available to operate. Ford urges the governor to take action immediately to increase the rate of pay for early childhood educators and leave no high-quality teacher behind.

“Continued bold steps like this are needed to stimulate the economy and revitalize enthusiasm in the field of education, an industry that I am passionate about,” said Ford. “As a teacher by profession, I know the sacrifices and dedication of most teachers in Illinois. It’s important to remember that early childhood education is the foundation that prepares students for teachers in our elementary schools and beyond.”

For 100% of the licensed centers that were surveyed this summer by Child Care Advocates United, all listed “personnel” as the most significant portion of their operating costs, regardless of if they are not-for-profit or for-profit entities. Using licensed centers in Chicago, Illinois as an example:

- Traditionally over 60% of the employees in the childcare industry are minimum wage earners. Consequently, the CCAP reimbursement rate was calculated to support a work force at this pay level.

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- In July 2012, the minimum wage in Illinois was \$8.25/hour. Likewise, the Child Care Assistance Program's (CCAP) reimbursement rate per child, per day was \$32.72 for three to six year olds, for example. This rate was fairly calculated for community based centers to operate comfortably.
- By July 2018, the minimum wage increased by 45.5% from \$8.25/hour to \$12/hour; however, the CCAP reimbursement rate remained frozen at July 2012 levels. Centers began to close throughout Illinois,
- In July 2018, the CCAP rates increased by 4.26% for centers, not enough to compensate for the drastic increase in workforce expenses.
- In July 2019, the minimum wage increased from \$12/hour to \$13/hour making to total increase in the minimum wage 57.6% from the baseline \$8.25/hour.
- In July 2019 NO INCREASE was given to centers accepting CCAP to help defer the cost of increased wages. Centers throughout Chicago are closing classrooms and sites because of the unaffordability of their largest line item: staffing.

Analysis of the minimum wage increases over the past 7 years in Chicago, Illinois

Year	Minimum Wage (City)	Cumulative percentage increase
2012	\$8.25	Baseline
2013	\$8.25	0%
2014	\$8.25	0%
2015	\$10.00	21.2% (from baseline)
2016	\$10.50	27.3% (from baseline)
2017	\$11.00	33.3% (from baseline)
2018	\$12.00	45.5% (from baseline)
2019	\$13.00	57.6% (from baseline)

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Summary of Illinois' CCAP reimbursement rate over the same 7 year time period.

Year	Under Age 2 CCAP Rates	Reimbursement Rates
2012	\$32.72	Baseline
2013	\$32.72	0%
2014	\$32.72	0%
2015	\$32.72	0%
2016	\$32.72	0%
2017	\$32.72	0%
2018	\$34.11	4.26% (from baseline)
2019	\$34.11	0%

A 57.6% expense line item increase juxtaposed against a mediocre 4.26% income line increase, which is the predominant resource in many organizations, is unjustifiable. Centers that serve mostly low-income families cannot survive. The children in Illinois' most vulnerable communities are the most at risk for losing access to high quality early childhood education. Illinois' most vulnerable children will be disproportionately affected by the stagnant CCAP rates as they cannot adjust for the 57.6% increase in staffing expenses.

For seven years the economy experienced an average of 2% in inflation. To offset rises in inflation, a cost of living allocation (COLA) is standard; however, over a seven-year period there was no COLA consideration in the reimbursement rates for CCAP. Hence, a 15.87% reimbursement rate is needed to level out and catch up from the 7 years with NO increase (2% at 7 years equates to a 14% increase). The additional 1.87% given to providers is a meager stipend for delivering such an important service.

The dire situation that Chicago is in will soon be traversed throughout our state. By year 2022, the state and the city will be on par as both will require a \$13.00 minimum wage. The minimum wage rate increases one dollar per year for three consecutive years starting in 2022. By 2025 the CBO industry is predicted to be under water, those sites experiencing any hiccups will close even sooner if there are any costly emergencies during the year.

## Analysis of future minimum wage increases in Illinois through 2024

Year	Minimum Wage (State)	Cumulative percentage increase
2022	\$13.00	57.6% (from baseline)
2023	\$14.00	69.6% (from baseline)
2024	\$15.00	81.2% (from baseline)

“It is regrettable that all arms of government agree on the importance of high-quality care, yet programs designed to support the nations’ most at-risk populations are only paid just enough to support a workforce where 60% are minimum wage earners,” said Ford. “However, preschool teachers in CBO’s are expected to do maximum wage earner work. Early childcare providers are valued by all standards as the foundation builders for future leaders.”

Research shows that children are more successful in school and beyond if they are given a strong foundation in the earliest years of their lives. Many early childhood service providers and policymakers nationwide support and agree with the research. Ford urges the current administration to recognize the need to move early childcare teachers past the minimum wage threshold and balance out the pay commensurate to the value of an extended day, layers of compliances, dismal retirement and benefit packages, and a continuous heavy workload.

State Representative Katie Stuart also voiced her support on the importance of teacher pay.

“I get frustrated being told all the time “teachers are important, teachers are important”. They’re so important, I value my kids’ teachers,” Stuart said. “But when it came down to making sure that those teachers in the room can afford to do that job, that’s where we frequently fell short.”

With the current administration, Illinois finally has an opportunity to create a comprehensive and effective educational ecosystem which is, by all measures, the best investment of everyone’s time and resources. Ford is excited and looks forward to being an avid partner in the legislature in support of this initiative.

“I am delighted to have a governor who supports education and proves it through policy,” said Ford. “Due to the governor’s zeal for education, I am eagerly anticipating the same consideration of increasing reimbursement rates for community-based organizations in the short-term coming months to ensure that Illinois’ most vulnerable children maintain access to high quality programs.”

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