

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
STATE OF MONTANA

GREG GIANFORTE
GOVERNOR



KRISTEN JURAS
LT. GOVERNOR

May 10, 2021

The Honorable Wylie Galt
Speaker of the House
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59601

The Honorable Mark Blasdel
President of the Senate
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59601

Dear Speaker Galt and President Blasdel:

In accordance with the power vested in me as Governor by the Constitution and the laws of the State of Montana, I hereby veto House Bill 624, "AN ACT ESTABLISHING THE BUSINESS TASK FORCE ON CHILD CARE; ESTABLISHING MEMBERSHIP; ESTABLISHING DUTIES; REQUIRING A REPORT; ESTABLISHING A SPECIAL REVENUE ACCOUNT; PROVIDING AN APPROPRIATION; AND PROVIDING AN IMMEDIATE EFFECTIVE DATE AND A TERMINATION DATE".

HB 624 directs the Department of Labor and Industry (DLI) to convene and facilitate a business task force on child care to examine the effects of child care affordability and accessibility on the workforce and Montana businesses. This task force would be funded by a special revenue account consisting of grants, gifts, and donations from public and private sources, and be required to develop and submit a report of its finding and recommendations to the governor and the legislature.

Our state has long faced unique child care challenges, and my administration is acutely aware of the toll that inadequate child care takes on Montana families and our economy. As we continue to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic and incentivize Montanans to return to work, the need for child care reforms and supports could not be greater – which is why I have already directed members of my cabinet to strategize and collaborate with those most impacted by our child care gap to proactively build a system that works for our families and businesses.

Montana has never had more resources available to increase access to and invest in child care, ultimately reducing a major barrier to workforce reentry. Currently, the state is using federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES), CARES II, and American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) resources to continue funding child care for essential workers and to provide business stabilization funding to child care providers so that they can return to full operations. Furthermore, my administration will continue to work in partnership with the legislature to ensure

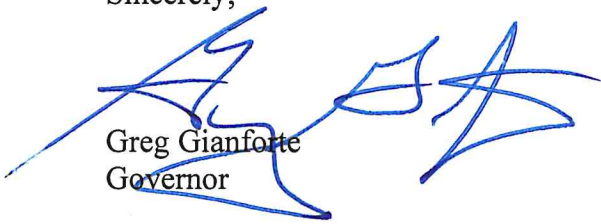
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that certain ARPA funds are prioritized in child care deserts for one-time equipment and necessary infrastructure, property improvements, worksite child care, licensing costs, and employee training and professional development.

The legislature and I have a tremendous opportunity to increase access to adequate and affordable child care in Montana. Rather than confirm through further study the flaws within Montana's child care system and the failures of past administrations to remedy these flaws, we must act now. I look forward to joining forces with the sponsor to meet the intent of her legislation.

For these reasons, I veto HB 624.

Sincerely,



Greg Gianforte
Governor

cc: Legislative Services Division
Secretary Christi Jacobsen