



April 26, 2021

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chairwoman
Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee
428 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Burr
Ranking Member
Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Murray and Ranking Member Burr:

AccessLex Institute is pleased to offer its support for S. 1360, the *Child Care for Working Families Act*. Introduced on April 22, 2021 by Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) and 25 other senators, the *Child Care for Working Families Act* would ensure that no family making under 150 percent of their state's median income pays more than 7 percent of their income on childcare and would expand access to high-quality preschool programs.

AccessLex Institute, in partnership with its nearly 200 nonprofit and state-affiliated ABA-approved member law schools, has been committed to improving access to legal education and to maximizing the affordability and value of a law degree since 1983. The AccessLex Center for Legal Education Excellence advocates for policies that make legal education work better for students and society alike and conducts research on the most critical issues facing legal education today.

According to a recommendation by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, families should not spend more than 7 percent of their income on childcare costs. However, the average single parent spends nearly 37 percent of their household income on childcare for one child and married couples pay almost 11 percent. What's worse is that the cost of childcare has increased 25 percent in the past decade, with infant care costs now exceeding the average cost of in-state tuition at public 4-year colleges in 29 states and the District of Columbia. Over the past year, the COVID-19 pandemic has shined a light on the critical importance of childcare to both individual working families and to the stability of our economy more broadly, but high-quality childcare is out of reach for many Americans.

This financial burden does not just fall on parents in the workforce: 24 percent of undergraduates and 32 percent of graduate students are parents. For student-parents, many of whom have limited access to affordable on-campus childcare, the high cost can lead them to devote less time to their studies or even drop out. Making childcare more affordable could help increase completion and lead to greater academic success. As the postsecondary student population changes, the supports provided to today's students must change to meet their evolving needs. AccessLex Institute supports the *Child Care for Working Families Act* because it would provide critical financial support to low-income families both in the workforce and pursuing higher education.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at cchapman@accesslex.org or Nancy Conneely, Managing Director of Policy, at nconneely@accesslex.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Chapman".

Christopher P. Chapman
President and Chief Executive Officer