

MOTION

The COVID-19 pandemic has laid bare the realities of being a working mother in the United States. Despite decades of progress towards equality, mothers continue to bear more of the caregiving responsibilities than fathers. 40% of mothers report a 3+ hour increase *each day* in their household responsibilities since the COVID crisis began, compared to 27% of fathers. When school and childcare centers closed due to the pandemic and families had to make a false choice as to whose careers would take the hit, a disproportionate number of mothers sacrificed their professional opportunities. By March 2021, almost 2 million fewer mothers of school-aged children were actively working compared to February 2020. Workforce participation rates among Black and Latina women reflect the fact that women of color disproportionately bore the brunt of the childcare closures. Accessible, affordable, and reliable childcare is a social justice imperative —without it, we cannot reach gender or racial equality.

Even before the pandemic, the insufficient supply of childcare spots meant that many families had to place a child on waitlists even before the child was born. The approximate loss of 7,500 childcare spots in the L.A. County region compounds this problem. Not only is childcare inaccessible, it is also unaffordable. A 2021 report by the UCLA Lewis Center for Regional Policy Studies revealed that even in 2017, L.A. County families with median household incomes of \$54,194 spent up to 26% of their income on child care. The financial burden, and the stress of unreliable childcare, puts a strain on the mental health of mothers, families, and children. L.A.'s children and families deserve better.

While these statistics are less pronounced among L.A. City employees, there is still an unmet need. Last spring, the City Council instructed the Personnel Department to conduct a survey of Women in the Workplace to understand the experiences and needs of City employees during the pandemic. The survey revealed that while all groups reported having childcare responsibilities at the same rate (61%-63%), women were significantly more likely to report that they had primary caregiver responsibilities and that they worried about childcare. Around 10% more women considered leaving their City job than men— in fact, between March 2020 and November 2021, 3.7% of the City's female workforce resigned, compared to 1.89% of the male workforce. Both men and women reported feeling like they missed out on work opportunities mostly due to dependent care responsibilities or stress.

As we collectively attempt to go back to a new normal, all workplaces must adopt mom- and family-friendly policies and provide childcare resources. As one of the largest employers in the region, the City of Los Angeles is committed to setting an example for a women- and family-friendly workplace. In the face of COVID-19 and school closures, the City accommodated employees by providing COVID-specific paid leave for dependent care. Last year, we implemented a guaranteed Paid Parental Time policy for the first time in the City's history. City employees in the Civic Center area have access to onsite childcare at the Joy Picus Child Development Center at a discounted rate. However, a large number of our employees' children are on the waitlist at any given point; and it can take several years before a spot becomes



available at Joy Picus. We must do more to realize gender parity among our workforce and move the policy landscape forward.

I THEREFORE MOVE that the City Council instruct the Personnel Department's Benefits Division and the City Administrative Officer (CAO) Labor Relations Division to report back on the feasibility of negotiating agreements with childcare centers across the City, especially ones in the Civic Center, to provide discounts for City employees.

I FURTHER MOVE that the City Council instruct the Personnel Department's Benefits Division and the City Administrative Officer (CAO) Labor Relations Division to develop a proposal for a childcare assistance program for City employees and to seek bargaining instructions as necessary from the Executive Employee Relations Committee (EERC).

PRESENTED BY:


NURY MARTINEZ
COUNCIL PRESIDENT, 6th District

SECONDED BY:



SECONDED BY:



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