

PERSONNEL, AUDITS, AND ANIMAL WELFARE COMMITTEE REPORT relative to developing a childcare assistance program for City employees.

Recommendation for Council action, pursuant to Motion (Martinez - O'Farrell - Raman):

INSTRUCT the Personnel Department's Benefits Division and the City Administrative Officer (CAO) Labor Relations Division to:

- a. Report on the feasibility of negotiating agreements with childcare centers across the City, especially the Civic Center, to provide discounts for City employees.
- b. Develop a proposal for a childcare assistance program for City employees and to seek bargaining instructions as necessary from the Executive Employee Relations Committee.

Fiscal Impact Statement: Neither the CAO nor the Chief Legislative Analyst has completed a financial analysis of this report.

Community Impact Statement: None submitted.

Summary:

On April 6, 2022, your Committee considered a Motion (Martinez – O'Farrell – Raman) relative to developing a childcare assistance program for City employees. According to the 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 percent of mothers report a 3+ hour increase *each day* in their household responsibilities since the COVID crisis began, compared to 27 percent 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 percent 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. LA's children and families deserve better.

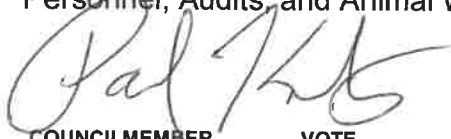
While these statistics are less pronounced among LA City employees, there is still an unmet need.

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 percent), women were significantly more likely to report that they had primary caregiver responsibilities and that they worried about childcare. Around 10 percent more women considered leaving their City jobs than men. In fact, between March 2020 and November 2021, 3.7 percent of the City's female workforce resigned, compared to 1.89 percent 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. After consideration and having provided an opportunity for public comment, the Committee moved to recommend approval of the Motion. This matter is now submitted to Council for its consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

Personnel, Audits, and Animal Welfare Committee



| COUNCILMEMBER  | VOTE   |
|----------------|--------|
| KORETZ:        | YES    |
| HARRIS-DAWSON: | YES    |
| BONIN:         | ABSENT |

ARL

4/6/22

**-NOT OFFICIAL UNTIL COUNCIL ACTS-**