**Early Educator Workforce Tax Credit – Key Points for Stakeholder Leaders**

* Access to high-quality child care is important to enable parents to work and also for the healthy development and school readiness of children.
* A high-quality program depends on a high-quality workforce. This means that child care staff or home-based providers have the knowledge and competencies related to early childhood development. It’s positive to have a passion for children, but it’s also important to pair that commitment with appropriate training and education.
* An early educator refundable tax credit will help ensure that when those in the workforce obtain credentials such as a Child Development Associate (CDA) credential or complete an associate degree or bachelor’s degree in early childhood, they will receive a pay increase that corresponds with their achievement. Tax credits are voluntary and earned.
* While most fields pay more as an individual’s education rises, that’s not really the case with early childhood education. Child care workers on average earn about $23,000 per year.
* Low wages make it difficult for the current early learning workforce to access higher education. And, even when they do, there is no guarantee of a pay raise.
* The low wages fuel high turnover, and from a child development perspective, that’s not in the interest of the children in any child care program. All the research points to the importance of continuity in care to help support the social-emotional development of children. But, in some child care programs, staff turn over every few months. Stability is important for children, particularly young children.
* High-quality child care programs are more costly to operate. So, the tax credit, which would provide a wage supplement, helps fill the gap between what parents can pay and the cost of high-quality care, which includes helping staff get paid a decent wage.
* The ultimate beneficiaries of investing in the early educator workforce are the children who are in child care. Research shows that children who attend high quality child care programs are more likely to start school ready to succeed.
* This makes a tax credit strategy a double win:
	+ Supporting the workforce in a way that rewards achievement and pays people a living wage and,
	+ an investment that ultimately results in children who will be better prepared to start school ready to learn.