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H. WILLIAM DEWEESE
THE MINORITY LEADERTHE STATE CAPITOL
HARRISBURG, PA 17120-2020
PHONE: (717) 783-3797HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURGJohn R. McGinley, Jr., Esquire, Chair
Independent Regulatory Review Commission
333 Market St. 14th Floor
Harrisburg, PA 17101

May 5, 2005

RE: DPW final form child care subsidy
regulations issued 4/7/2005

Dear Chairman McGinley:

I write to urge your support for the above-referenced child care subsidy regulations, which appear on IRRC's voting schedule for May 12, 2005. Quality, affordable child care for low-income, working families is essential to their self-sufficiency and to ensuring that their children enjoy a safe, educational setting while parents work.

The Department of Public Welfare has recognized that barriers in the current subsidized child care program have been a significant concern to low-income families, the community, and elected officials. Working in partnership with families, their advocates, child care providers, and the child care eligibility agencies, DPW has completed a critical review and substantial revision of the subsidized child care program. This process resulted in publication of proposed rulemaking at 55 Pa. Code Chapter 3041 on September 11, 2004.

On April 7, 2005, DPW issued final form regulations. The final form regulations retain or improve upon the many policy changes in the proposed regulations that better support low-income, working parents and their children. The regulations are strongly supported by the community, including the Pennsylvania Child Care Campaign (PACCC), a coalition of low-income parents, child care providers, child advocates, faith-based organizations, and others concerned about access to affordable, quality child care for low-income, working families. The Campaign has encouraged many of the policy changes in the final form regulations for nearly 10 years.

DPW's final form regulations will bring substantial improvement to every aspect of the subsidized child care program. The following are just a few of the many reasons to support this regulatory package:

First, returning to a 20-hour per week work requirement (from the current 25 hour per week standard) will help parents transition from welfare to work and will help part-time workers, whose employers will not increase their hours, remain employed.

Second, replacing the current mandate that all parents file for court ordered support with a program that informs parents about the benefits of pursuing court ordered child support, but allows the parent to either file for support or negotiate a voluntary agreement of support with the absent parent, will better serve the economic and emotional needs of children and their families.

Third, simplifying the eligibility process by permitting alternative means of verification for each factor of eligibility through a sequential verification scheme will make the system work better for families and child care providers.

I hope you will support Pennsylvania's low-income working families by voting to approve DPW's final form child care subsidy regulations on May 12, 2005.

Sincerely,

Honorable H. William DeWeese,
50th Legislative District
The Minority Leader

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