

READY LOUISIANA COALITION

Joint Statement of Support

for Inclusion of Increased Investment in Quality Early Care and Education in Governor, Legislator, Board of Elementary and Secondary Education Candidates' Platforms

The future of Louisiana depends on how willing we are to care for and prepare our youngest citizens. High-quality early care and education prepares our students for a smart start in life, enables families to be productive in the workforce, and serves as an economic engine for local communities.

We believe young children in Louisiana should have access to high-quality early care and education to ensure they are off to a smart start in life, given that 90% of brain development takes place between birth and age four;

We know that the Child Care Assistance Program in Louisiana has been substantially cut, and that child care instability has a significant effect on Louisiana's workforce participation and productivity, including costing Louisiana employers \$816 million a year and causing a \$1.1 billion loss for the state's economy;

We support the use of public funds that result in high returns on investment, and high-quality early care and education has been shown to result in up to a 13% return on investment;

We are committed to working to implement the recommendations of the bipartisan Louisiana Early Childhood Care and Education Commission and its LA B to 3 Report, a bold and ambitious early care and education agenda to prepare Louisiana's young children for kindergarten and beyond, and to support our working families;

We know that Louisiana voters will vote for candidates who support child care, given that key findings from a March poll showed that a majority (62%) of likely Louisiana voters support increasing state funding for quality child care that would benefit working families, including over 50% of voters in each region of the state and 50% of conservative voters, 70% of moderate and 86% of liberal voters;

We applaud the Governor and the Legislature for taking a first step this year in investing state dollars in early care and education, but know there remain thousands of working families who need access to quality child care for their young children.

For these reasons, we have committed to work together:

- 1 To educate candidates for Governor, the Legislature and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education** on the need for increased access to quality early care and education for Louisiana's working families, especially for children under age four.
- 2 To elevate the topic of early care and education** in the public discourse around the elections, into debates and forums and regular and social media.
- 3 To advocate for the inclusion of the plank (on the next page) on the platforms** of candidates for Governor, the Legislature, and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

The Ready Louisiana Coalition asks all candidates to include a plank in their platforms to substantially increase access to quality early care and education for Louisiana's working families, especially for children under age four.

A comprehensive approach to increasing access to quality early care and education is required, including:

- Support the bipartisan Louisiana Early Childhood Care & Education Commission's LA B to 3 plan** to make quality child care more affordable for working families by investing \$86 million in new funding annually to increase access from 22,000 to 177,000 children under age four over the next decade.

Further increase infant and toddler child care reimbursement rates to reflect the true cost of quality care.
- Increase pay for early childhood educators in child care centers**, who currently earn a median wage of \$8.95 an hour, through mechanisms such as the School Readiness Tax Credit for teachers.

Review existing dedicated funds and identify opportunities to redirect them to quality early care and education.

Commit to early care and education as a top priority for any new or expanded revenue.

The following 64 organizations join in support of this statement:

Business Groups

Baton Rouge Area Chamber
 Business Council of New Orleans & The River Region
 Committee of 100 for Economic Development, Inc.
 Committee of One Hundred, Inc. of Northwest Louisiana
 East St. Tammany Chamber
 GNO Inc
 Greater Shreveport Chamber of Commerce
 Hispanic Chamber of New Orleans
 Jefferson Business Council
 Jefferson Chamber
 Kenner Business Association
 Louisiana Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives
 Louisiana Early Childhood Business Roundtable
 Monroe Chamber of Commerce
 New Orleans Regional Black Chamber of Commerce
 New Orleans Chamber
 New Orleans Business Alliance
 Northshore Business Council
 One Acadiana
 River Region Chamber of Commerce
 Southwest Louisiana Economic Development Alliance
 St. Tammany West Chamber of Commerce

Advocacy Groups & Community Organizations

Agenda for Children
 Beary Cherry Tree
 Carlie Care Kids
 Child Care Association of Louisiana
 Children's Coalition of NELA
 Education's Next Horizon
 Gambel Communications
 Institute of Mental Hygiene
 Independent Women's Organization
 Kingsley House
 League of Women's Voters of Louisiana
 Link Restaurant Group
 Louisiana Budget Project
 Louisiana Chapter - American Association of Pediatrics
 Louisiana Children's Museum
 Louisiana Partnership for Children and Families
 Louisiana Policy Institute for Children
 Louisiana Progress
 Louisiana Public Health Institute
 National Council of Jewish Women, Greater New Orleans Section
 New Orleans Campaign for Grade-Level Reading
 ResourceFull Consulting
 Step Forward
 The Center for Development and Learning
 The Early Childhood Development Center of Avoyelles
 The Education Trust
 The New Orleans Coalition
 The Power Coalition for Equity and Justice
 Urban League of Louisiana
 Volunteers of America Greater Baton Rouge

United Ways

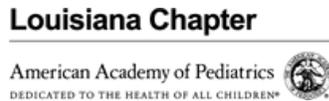
Capital Area United Way	United Way of Northwest Louisiana
Louisiana Association of United Ways	United Way of Southeast Louisiana
St. Landry Evangeline United Way	United Way of Southwest Louisiana
United Way of Acadiana	Women United--SLEUW
United Way of Iberia	Women United--UWSELA
United Way of Northeast Louisiana	Women United--UWSWLA

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COMMITTEE OF ONE HUNDRED, INC.
Mobilizing business for a better NW Louisiana



Capital Area United Way



Louisiana Association of United Ways



St. Landry-Evangeline United Way



United Way of Acadiana



United Way of Northeast Louisiana



United Way of Northwest Louisiana



United Way of Southeast Louisiana



United Way of Southwest Louisiana

