

State Senator Shelli Yoder's Remarks on Childcare

- Today, Democrats wanted to discuss the issue of affordable, quality childcare in Indiana.
- It's no secret that this is a pervasive issue across Indiana. Whether we are discussing workforce issues, public health, land use or aid for families—this issue comes up.
- And that's not surprise. Just listen to the facts:
- Statewide, [45% of children live in a childcare desert \(4 out of 10\)](#), and our shortage of providers is ongoing.
- Currently, providers are only able to accommodate about 41% of the 502 thousand children who need childcare, meaning about 300 thousand children are left with no options.
- Even when childcare is available, cost continues to be a barrier:
 - According to the [Economic Policy Institute](#) (a nonprofit, nonpartisan group studying the needs of low- and middle-income workers), the average monthly cost of infant childcare in Indiana is \$1,051, and the average monthly cost to place a 4-year-old child in center-based care is \$796.
 - Indiana is ranked 18 out of the 50 states for childcare expenses and according to the EPI. "A minimum wage worker in Indiana would need to work full time for 43 weeks, or from January to November, just to pay for childcare for one infant."
 - Ultimately, 59% of parents choose to cut work hours or leave their job due to lack of childcare.
 - The result? Indiana loses about \$1.1B in economic activity and \$118M in tax revenue annually because of our childcare infrastructure failure.
 - It's also worth noting that only 17%--17%--of IN childcare facilities are considered high quality.
- Across the board, in every area (whether it's location, quality, cost) childcare is an issue for everyone. During the interim, we heard in both the Interim Study Committee on Public Health (Behavioral Health and Human Sciences) and the Land Use Task Force that the current childcare system is not working for parents, employers or providers.
- Significant, structural change is needed if Indiana hopes to address this problem, including making changes to licensing requirements for childcare facilities **and** boosting the aid, support and respect given to childcare providers.
- We know the system we have now is hurting families and driving away providers. It's also exacerbating our workforce issue.
- The ability to access essential childcare, to be able to engage in the workforce and make a living, shouldn't depend on whether or not you're lucky enough to live in a zip code where affordable, quality care is available.
- Hours of committee time has been spent discussing this topic, and experts have told us what is needed to address this problem, bolster our economy, and aid Hoosier parents.
- It's time to push up our sleeves and get this done.
- *A state that works* should have a childcare system that works for Hoosiers trying to provide for their families.
- That's why Democrats have a number of bills, in the House and Senate, to tackle the issue of childcare.
- We will be pushing for expanded eligibility for childcare, increased support for providers and the adoption of universal pre-K, among other critical policies, and we hope our colleagues across the aisle will join us in addressing the pressing issue of childcare on behalf of Hoosiers.