

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## SB 5136

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As of February 9, 2021

**Title:** An act relating to prohibiting fees for child care licenses.

**Brief Description:** Prohibiting fees for child care licenses.

**Sponsors:** Senators Wilson, C., Frockt, Nguyen and Short.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Early Learning & K-12 Education: 1/22/21, 1/27/21 [DPS-WM].  
Ways & Means: 2/09/21.

**Brief Summary of First Substitute Bill**

- Prohibits the secretary of the Department of Children, Youth, and Families from charging fees to the licensee for obtaining a child care license until June 30, 2023.

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5136 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass and be referred to Committee on Ways & Means.

Signed by Senators Wellman, Chair; Nobles, Vice Chair, K-12; Wilson, C., Vice Chair, Early Learning; Hawkins, Ranking Member; Dozier, Hunt, McCune, Mullet and Pedersen.

**Staff:** Ailey Kato (786-7434)

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS

**Staff:** Sarah Emmans (786-7478)

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

**Background:** Current law requires the secretary of the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF) to charge fees to the licensee for obtaining a child care license. The secretary has the discretion to waive fees if the fees would not be in the best interest of public health and safety, or when the fees would be to the financial disadvantage of the state. Fees charged must be based on, but must not exceed, the cost to DCYF for the licensure of the activity and may include costs of necessary inspection.

DCYF must establish the fees in rule. The annual fee for family home providers is \$30, and the annual fee for child care centers is \$125 for the first 12 children plus \$12 for each additional child.

**Summary of Bill (First Substitute):** DCYF is prohibited from charging fees to the licensee for obtaining a child care license until June 30, 2023.

**EFFECT OF CHANGES MADE BY EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION COMMITTEE (First Substitute):**

- Expires the prohibition on child care licensing fees on June 30, 2023.

**Appropriation:** The bill contains a null and void clause requiring specific funding be provided in an omnibus appropriation act.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Creates Committee/Commission/Task Force that includes Legislative members:** No.

**Effective Date:** Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on Original Bill (Early Learning & K-12 Education):** *The committee recommended a different version of the bill than what was heard.* PRO: The child care industry was in a crisis before the pandemic, and it has gotten worse. Providers are not making living wages, and this industry is predominantly run by women, especially women of color, immigrants and refugees. Although the fee seems like a small dollar amount, this is a lot for the struggling child care industry. This bill is a direct way for the state to help child care providers and can help bring more providers into the industry. DCYF has increased the fees in recent years. During this time of economic challenge, eliminating fees will help an industry when they need it. Child care is critical for getting people back to work and for economic recovery.

**Persons Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education):** PRO: Senator Claire Wilson, Prime Sponsor; Amy Anderson, Association of Washington Business; Julie Schroath, Creative Kids Learning Center.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Early Learning & K-12 Education):**

No one.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony on First Substitute (Ways & Means):** PRO: This bill will provide relief to child care providers, who are small business owners, through a period of instability. Child care is critical for economic recovery.

**Persons Testifying (Ways & Means):** PRO: Bob Findlay, Child Care Resources; Amy Anderson, Association of Washington Business; Brian Trimble, Washington Child Care Centers Association.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying (Ways & Means):** No one.