



CITY OF LAGUNA NIGUEL

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CITY COUNCIL

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June 21, 2024

The Honorable Alex Lee
Chair of the Human Services Committee
1020 N Street, Suite 124
Sacramento, CA 95814

**SUBJECT: SB 1401 (Blakespear) - Family Childcare Home: United States Armed Forces
Notice of Support**

Dear Assembly Member Lee,

On behalf of the City of Laguna Niguel I write in strong support of SB 1401 (Blakespear) to create a state licensure exemption for home childcare providers who are already certified by the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD).

There is a critical shortage of child care options. The struggle to find childcare is even greater for military families. Moving every few years means starting the search all over again. These moves can also harm military spouses in their professional lives, especially those whose careers require state licensure, like childcare providers.

Recognizing that affordable, quality child care is essential for morale, mission readiness, and retention, the U.S. military offers several options. One option is Family Child Care (FCC), where children are watched at a DOD certified provider's home. FCCs are regulated by the DOD and providers undergo stringent background checks, frequent safety inspections, and must meet educational requirements similar to those required by the State of California.

Like other childcare options, FCCs have long waitlists. The DOD estimates there is nearly a 50% deficit in the number of FCC providers. These wait times sometimes lead military families to civilian childcare options, which are often more expensive. Moreover, adding military children further strains limited supply, increasing wait times for everyone.

In response to long wait times and overcome the administrative barriers to open an FCC, the DOD has identified waiving state childcare licensure requirements for FCC providers who are already certified by the DOD as a state policy priority. A waiver means more childcare options and thus shorter waits.

This waiver would also help FCC providers — 87% of whom were military spouses in 2021 — by reducing the administrative burden associated with completing time-consuming, expensive, and sometimes redundant state child care licensure requirements. A waiver means these spouses can start earning income much faster after a move, preventing financial instability.

For these reasons, the City of Laguna Niguel **supports** SB 1401 (Blakespear) and encourages the Assembly Committee on Human Services to vote in support. Should you have any questions about our position, please contact Kevin O'Connor, Management Assistant, at koconnor@cityoflagunaniguel.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Kelly Jennings".

Kelly Jennings
Mayor