

Q: *Does HB477/S223, if passed, cost money? When would this be reflected in the budget?*

A: There is no cost associated with the bill in the fiscal year it passes. After a providers' organization is certified and if it reaches an agreement with the DEEC any request for additional appropriation must be submitted to the General Court. See section 21, subsection (e).

Q: *If the General Court does not fully fund the agreement will individual centers then be committed to cover the costs of wage increases and other improvements?*

A: No. Any unfunded section of the agreement will be sent back to the parties for further negotiation. Moreover, individual employers are not party to the agreement between the DEEC and the providers' organization and would continue to have local control to set wage rates and personnel policies. Any improvements in the agreement would be funded and paid directly by the Commonwealth.

Q: *Won't passing this bill mean that small resource-needy centers will be forced to pass on higher costs to their privately paying parents, or worse, risk going out of business?*

A: No. The high cost of child care is a serious problem which we believe we can work to address through this legislation. Centers already struggle to meet current regulatory demands, including pressures to hire a more educated and highly qualified workforce, and cannot be asked to fund an agreement under this legislation. What we need are innovative, comprehensive solutions—negotiated by those who work in childcare centers and the DEEC—that make it financially sustainable to keep talented teachers in the industry. These solutions can't and shouldn't be met by individual center budgets, which is why there needs to be a state-wide collaborative solution.

Q: *Isn't HB477/SB223 really just a collective bargaining bill in disguise?*

A: No. This bill does nothing that resembles collective bargaining or that implicates federal or state collective bargaining laws. It can be confused with a collective bargaining bill because it calls for negotiations between the DEEC and the providers' organization. However, wages, hours and conditions at individual centers, the crux of collective bargaining cannot be discussed in these negotiations, rather only the state-wide standards under which centers operate. See section 21, subsection (a). The AFT-MA and the MTA support the bill because they have the shared goal of promoting quality early education and the elevation of the profession.

Q: *Does this bill create a two-tier system between included centers and excluded centers?*

A: Concerns about this bill creating a two-tier system are misplaced. Right now we have a two-tier system wherein about half of centers thrive in areas where parents can often afford to pay twice the subsidized rate, while independent centers with large numbers of subsidized children, whose employees would be covered by the bill, struggle under very different economic conditions.

Q: *Why do the YMCAs and Boys and Girls club oppose HB477/SB223?*

A: We believe that they oppose the bill more because of the national organizations' positions on unionization in this sector, rather than policy specifics in the legislation. However, in deference to their position employees at the Ys, the B&GSs, Community Action Programs, and large chains of more than 10 centers are not covered by the bill. See section 19, subsection (a).

Q: *Why are directors and teachers together in this union?*

A: Though they have the roles of supervisor and supervised, teachers and directors in these centers have more in common than not. Moreover, center-internal labor relations issues are explicitly excluded from the negotiations between the providers' organization and the DEEC. See section 21, subsection (g).

Q: *Does this bill undermine local control over education and how the center runs?*

A: No. The areas of negotiation are spelled out in section 21, subsection (a), and only include areas like the quality ratings system and workforce development that are already under the purview of DEEC regulation.

Q: *Why is HB477/SB223 so important?*

A: Research has shown the vital importance of early education in preparing our youngest citizens with the social and academic skills they need to be successful. One study from the National Institute for Early Childhood Education Research showed that an investment of one dollar in early education today saves seven dollars of future spending. Parents with affordable child care in their communities are also less likely to suffer from workplace absenteeism, helping to grow the economy. The most important factor in quality early education is the teacher in the room. Bringing these teachers and directors to the table is the right next step towards providing every child in Massachusetts access to a high-quality early education.