Unified Economic Opportunity Commission

OVERVIEW

ENTITY | **WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY SUBCOMMITTEE**
DATE | October 5, 2023
TIME | 2:00 PM – 4:00 PM
LOCATION | Virtual

AGENDA

2:00 PM – Welcome, Co-Chairs Sen. Luz Escamilla & Rep. Karianne Lisonbee

Sen. Luz Escamilla welcomed everyone and thanked them for their attendance.

2:05 PM – Public Comment

There was no public comment at this time.

2:10 PM – Overview of UEOC timeline, Kyle Palmer

Kyle Palmer informed everyone that we are getting close to drafting and Governor's Budget deadlines. The goal of this meeting is to get recommendations ready for the next UEOC meeting on October 18. There will be one other meeting in January, but we want to move everything through the interim process—so it will be important to get everything wrapped up quickly.

Escamilla added that everyone should participate with ideas. This is our chance to listen to feedback from the executive branch with Aimee Winder Newton here and to hear other ideas.

2:15 PM – Approval of August 31 Minutes

- **Motion: Rep. Rosemary Lesser**
- **Second: Natalie Kaddas**
- **Motion passed unanimously.**

2:20 PM – Present, Discuss & Vote: Private Public Partnership Policy, Sen. Escamilla

Escamilla presented her **Private Public Partnership** bill, for which she has already opened a bill file. She began by saying that childcare is beyond just a women's issue: It is a family issue. This incentive pilot program idea is just one tool.

The three players in this conversation are the State of Utah, employers (many of whom are coming to the table to be part of this conversation—even smaller businesses, to form a co-op version), and high-quality, licensed childcare providers.

Legislative staff has been working on the details of the pilot program. Employers will apply, and then the state will provide the facility. Businesses will then enter into a third party contract with high-quality providers, whether they are for-profit or not. There will be no cost for leasing the vacant property. We will then ask the businesses to have all contractual agreements and staff ready within six months, and the State will be ready with the location. 60% capacity will be for the company's employees, and 40% for state employees and community members. There will be a sunset review in five years.

We will rely heavily on the Governor's Office of Economic Opportunity to administer the incentive and obviously work very closely with the Division of Facilities Construction and Management (DFCM). The director has been wonderful in working with us. The bill will ask for five locations on the Wasatch Front to begin with. Hopefully in five years, we can showcase that this works and we can then take it statewide. Escamilla believes that her colleagues can support this, as it is only a pilot.

Heather Brace asked whether multiple businesses can come together to use one location. Escamilla said yes and explained that this is the co-op option.

She then asked whether the state would be involved in making recommendations for the actual childcare provider who will come and run the center. Will they manage any of the costs and will there be any administrative assistance?

Escamilla said that she wants to give as much freedom to the employer as possible in terms of choosing which company or non-profit they want to engage with. They will be required to choose one that is considered evidence-based and high-quality. A lot of that, including licensing, is already defined in statute and within the Department of Health and Human Services.

She briefly discussed a companion bill to establish stackable credentials for the professionals in the industry. Part of the problem with this industry is the lack of opportunity for growth. Want to draw more professionals.

Rep. Rosemary Lesser said she is really excited to be a part of the solution to this problem the state is facing. She asked how this bill will interface with the bill that Rep. Ashlee Matthews did last year with regard to using state property for childcare. How do these overlap?

Escamilla said that she ran that bill with Matthews and is very familiar. It allows for the state to engage in contracting and putting childcare inside a facility. It codifies that a state facility can be used for that purpose, so it was a good first step. An example is the Cannon Building.

Jennifer Christopulos asked about the employer's role. How are they going to participate in this process?

Escamilla said that the role of the employer is to apply to the incentive and then engage in a contract. They are then responsible to give the state 40% of the facility's capacity. They will bring their own employees and manage that piece.

Members briefly discussed the details of what a co-op might look like.

Natalie Kaddas said this is exciting. She asked: How do you define small business vs. large business? And what is this co-op? Will one small business be leading that effort?

Escamilla said many of these things are still being decided, but the definitions of small and large businesses are not relevant for this bill. The goal is to have facilities serve the maximum number of children. She has tried to think outside the box to create something more appealing to the Legislature than a subsidy.

Kaddas said she likes the idea of partnering with larger entities, as this is not something her business could do on its own.

Brigette Weier, online: Sen. Escamilla, this is very innovative. I'd love to share with you what providers are saying about this and what other states are doing. We need to put the business infrastructure into childcare too. Check out Oregon's bill on micro centers.

Escamilla responded, saying that her companion bill addresses some of this. She is talking with higher education institutions about micro centers and a small business development approach. She took measures to follow up with Weier offline.

She motioned to recommend this to the UEOC.

- **Motion: Sen. Luz Escamilla**
- **Second: Rep. Rosemary Lesser**
- **Motion passed unanimously**

2:40 PM – Present, Discuss, & Vote: Additional Policy Recommendations, Rep. Lesser

Business License Policy:
Lesser explained that this idea came out of the Suazo Business Center as an effort to support business owners. We may be able to accomplish this administratively rather than through legislation.

The Department of Commerce has a one-stop shop of sorts for obtaining business licenses, but it does not include the opportunity to use the Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) identifier for small business owners. The Driver's License Division allows this for driver's licenses. She proposed making online services available and having the DOC make adjustments. She also proposed continuing to streamline the process of obtaining a business license so that the individual can be directed from the DOC site to the appropriate entity. She has talked with Mayor

Debbie Winn about this. The current one-stop stops right at the point of entry; we need to consider ways to make this more customer-friendly.

Escamilla clarified that the ITIN has a direct correlation to the IRS for the purpose of taxation. Often used by immigrant populations to achieve several things.

Lesser proposed that the group should work together to streamline the process of obtaining a business license. This would allow many of the initiatives the Governor has embraced to move forward.

Escamilla mentioned that another UEOC working group is working on something similar. Kori Ann Edwards added that the client citizen portal is under development. She said we could follow up with the Department of Technology Services.

Winn thanked Lesser for working with her on this. She spoke in support of streamlining this process to simplify these things for citizens.

Escamilla said this group can ask Government Efficiency to include this in their work on the citizen portal, specifically referring to the ITIN piece.

Lesser said she would like to see a link to move to the locality from the state site.

Edwards motioned to assign UEOC staff to move this recommendation to the next step and to work on it with the Working Group on Government Efficiency.

- **Motion: Kori Ann Edwards**
- **Second: Sen. Luz Escamilla**
- **Passed unanimously**

Salary History Policy:
Lesser began by crediting the support of the state for individuals returning the workforce after large resume gaps, particularly through initiatives like the Returnship Program. She believes the next step is to stop using salary history in the hiring process. Relying on salary history penalizes those who have stepped away from the workforce to care for family members or reduced their hours for a variety of reasons. That disparity perpetuates through a person's career. Her proposal to the subcommittee was to eliminate the requirement to provide a salary history in the application process.

Escamilla asked whether we would start in the state, or if it is currently happening. Lesser said that it is happening in Salt Lake, but that it is not yet happening at the state level. Escamilla asked whether Lesser would like to change this in both the public and private sectors, and Lesser said that we can certainly start with the public sector. Alabama, the most recent state to do this, she said, required it across the whole state. It may be ambitious to do so here. However, Colorado and Nevada have implemented this as a statewide restriction on that question.

Edwards asked whether Lesser had spoken with John Barrand at DHRM about this. She believes it might be in statute already for the state. She agreed to make this connection. Escamilla mentioned that even if it is restricted for state agencies, the group could still support expanding the restriction to—eventually expanding to the private sector.

Lesser said she would love to talk with John Barrand about it. Edwards agreed to make the connection.

Lesser reiterated her proposal: That we recommend eliminating salary history as part of an employment application for public entities in our state.

Concetta Defa asked whether the question of salary history could then be asked post-hire, after an offer is on the table. Lesser said that she envisioned that it would apply to the entire hiring process.

- **Motion: Rep. Rosemary Lesser**
- **Second: Jennifer Christopulos**
- **Passed unanimously**

K-3 Math Program:
Lesser cited a study by Dr. Susan Madsen which shows that Utah students are falling behind in math. The state has invested in K-3 literacy, and the data is showing a need for similar focus in mathematics. This will have a lot of upstream impacts for students going into tech-related jobs in the future (healthcare and other targeted industries). Mastery of mathematics by grade 8 is critical. She discussed the significant gender gap in Utah: The state is ranked 50th in the country, with the biggest gap in achievement between 8th grade girls and boys. She clarified that despite this significant gap, achievement is high for both boys and girls. However, looking at common career opportunities in Utah, girls are being left behind in mathematics.

She also cited work by Natalie Gochour with Kem C. Gardner which emphasizes that the success of the state's economy is, in large part, due to the burgeoning tech sector. We will not be able to keep up with it if we are not educating our students well in mathematics and seeing them achieve.

Escamilla: We will not move the needle unless we close those gaps.

Lesser suggested that we recommend similar strategies to approach the gender gap in mathematics as we have taken to improve literacy.

Escamilla asked whether WIES would be the best subcommittee or working group to plant this seed. She brought up the involvement of relevant agencies.

Palmer said we certainly can coordinate with different agencies and move this down the line.

Ashleigh Jensen suggested looking at data to see which age groups will be most appropriate to target with an initiative like this. She mentioned the Computer Science for Utah program, which targets K-3. Since the data we have been discussing today is concerned with older children, maybe the subcommittee could look at designing an initiative to help junior high school students.

Lesser said that it seems like the gender gap is most pronounced in eighth grade. She motioned to engage staff in coordinating with the Utah State Board of Education to look at strategies for improving mathematics achievement in our state.

- **Motion: Rep. Rosemary Lesser**
- **Second: Sen. Luz Escamilla**
- **Passed unanimously**

3:10 PM – Summarize, Discuss, & Vote: Child Tax Credit Expansion, Rep. Pulsipher

Rep. Susan Pulsipher highlighted parts of her presentation at the last WIES meeting, emphasizing that childcare is critical to our economy and to families, as all children need it in one form or another. She listed the following as continued efforts to improve childcare in Utah:

- Child Tax Credit Expansion: This bill will increase the child tax credit to include children 4 years of age and younger.
  - Pulsipher said that she would ideally like to increase it to 5 years, but proposes this knowing of the budget constraints the legislature will face this year.
- Cities and towns can continue efforts to increase access to childcare in their municipalities and reduce regulations.
  - Met with ULCT today. They are looking at things that they can do to reduce regulations and some costs. Will continue to increase those efforts. Encouraging businesses to provide childcare onsite.
- Encourage businesses to provide flexible schedules for employees.
- Implement provisions of HB15.
- Increase childcare for state workers.

Escamilla motioned that WIES fully support the **Child Tax Credit Expansion** bill.

- **Motion: Sen. Luz Escamilla**
- **Second: Rep. Rosemary Lesser**
- **Passed unanimously**

Escamilla and Pulsipher discussed the efforts on the local level further. Pulsipher pointed out that increasing access to childcare actually bolsters local economies. She is trying to promote this message to leaders to encourage them.

3:20 PM – Present, Discuss, & Vote: Zoning for Childcare, Rep. Lisonbee

Palmer explained that this item will encourage cities to zone for childcare. Updates to statute may be necessary in some areas. Staff can send information as this develops.

Escamilla added that Lisonbee has expertise on this issue as a former city councilwoman.

3:40 PM – Office of Families Presentation, Aimee Winder Newton

Aimee Winder Newton shared with the group the goals of the Office of Families:

1. Marriage readiness
2. Protecting children
3. Protecting families

Initiatives to achieve Marriage Readiness:
- Work with the Utah Marriage Commission: Free resources for Utahns: podcasts, classes on healthy relationships, discount on marriage licenses
- Preparing young adults for marriage/financial success
- Measure family structure in data
- Educate on the population replacement

Protecting Children:
- Social media legislation and media campaign
- Child abuse prevention
- Cell phones in schools
- Helping children who have lost caregivers
- Align public service campaigns: More preventative work rather than reactive; better understanding of childhood trauma and its effects

Supporting families:
- Home visiting expansion for vulnerable families: Escamilla helped secure $15MM for a pilot program
- High quality care for children
- Family friendly workforce policies, including leave for foster families in state employment policy.
- Men and boys task force: Connection to workforce, mental health and willingness to ask for help, educational outcomes, deaths of despair, fathers engaging with children

Lesser asked if Newton is connected with the Policy Project on their new Safe Child Program, and Newton confirmed that she is.

Escamilla mentioned the bill she will be running to coordinate information-sharing to help families that are engaging with state programs frequently.

Edwards thanked Newton for the great work she is doing to prioritize families. It’s such an important part of the whole ecosystem.

Kaddas thanked Newton and asked whether members can access her presentation when the budget is finalized. Newton agreed to share it.

Palmer expressed gratitude to members for their attendance and for the great proposals coming from the subcommittee.

4:00 PM – Adjourn

MEMBERS ATTENDING

(**bold** = in attendance, *italics* = excused)

Sen. Luz Escamilla, Co-Chair
Rep. Karianne Lisonbee, Co-Chair
Sen. Ann Millner
Rep. Rosemary Lesser
Kori Ann Edwards
Natalie Kaddas
Tina Hazlett
Karen DelPriore
Kelly Vincent
Heather Brace
Jennifer Christopulos
Morgan Lyon Cotti
Melissa Freigang
Concetta Defa
Mayor Debbie Winn

STAFF ATTENDING

(**bold** = in attendance, *italics* = excused)

Ryan Starks
Kori Ann Edwards
Kyle Palmer
Abby Hunsaker
Ashleigh Jensen
Sara Edgar

GUESTS ATTENDING

(**bold** = in attendance, *italics* = excused)

Nate McDonald, DWS
Paige Stevens, Senate
Aspen Hawks, House
Robbi Foxxe, GOPB
Kate Bradford, GOPB
Tiffany Chan, GOPB