

# Unified Economic Opportunity Commission

## OVERVIEW

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**ENTITY** | WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY SUBCOMMITTEE

**DATE** | August 22, 2024

**TIME** | 3:00 PM – 4:30 PM

**LOCATION** | GOEO – Canyonlands Conference Room

## AGENDA

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3:00 PM – Welcome, Co-Chairs Sen. Luz Escamilla & Rep. Karianne Lisonbee

3:10 PM – Overview of Goals & Timeline, Abby Hunsaker

Abby Hunsaker reminded subcommittee members that the next UEOC meeting is on September 16. WIES will have at least one opportunity to present policy recommendations and administrative goals to the full commission before the legislative session starts.

3:15 PM – Approval of Minutes, Chairs

Melissa Freigang motioned to approve the minutes. Concetta Defa seconded the motion and it passed unanimously.

3:20 PM – Local Governments and Childcare, Grace Reef

Grace Reef reported on her research findings on local government barriers to childcare. In July, she held eight focus groups with providers. In all four of the home-based provider groups, this issue came up: local ordinances mandating fence height, limiting the number of children or the number of employees allowed, restricting parking, etc.

Reef looked at each city and town mentioned, and she believes that there is wiggle room in current law. Localities are issuing a local business license, which comes with certain requirements. Local ordinances are not consistent with state law; they are often stricter. She gave several examples, including getting sign-offs by neighbors and being the only childcare center within 300 feet. These limits are not related to the local childcare license.

Escamilla asked about the interactions between state law and local ordinances in other states. Reef said that most communities want to “maintain the tranquility of the neighborhood,” mandating that a business doesn’t affect neighbors. This can be controversial. Some states have implemented laws that intercede and protect centers from local ordinances.

Hunsaker suggested that a one page white paper of best practices be created.

Rep. Lisonbee said that she opened a bill file four years ago and wrote a strongly-worded letter to cities to let them know that the shortage of childcare in the state would impact their ability to further their economic development goals and that they needed to loosen their regulations. Stakeholders assured her they would engage, but they have not done much on their own. Maybe there is a new landscape of city council people, but she is not sure this is ripe. Having that constant pressure on them means that they will eventually change.

Escamilla asked whether this should be added to the strategic plan, Lisonbee confirmed that it should.

Reef shared an example of a home-based business that is only allowed to have one employee, which is a major issue when that one employee leaves or is sick.

Melissa Freigang asked whether there are statutory definitions of "high-impact" vs. "low-impact," and Reef said that every municipality has its own. Escamilla said that standardizing definitions is a good policy call and a good place to start.

### 3:30 PM – Barriers Discussion Reports

#### 3:30 PM – Small business, Tina Hazlett & Melissa Freigang

Tina Hazlett reported that this group discussed access to new groups and opportunities and exposure. She mentioned marketing grants and allyship. She also talked about shared office space, shared HR representatives, etc.

Escamilla asked whether they considered co-ops. Hazlett said she would be happy to look into that further.

#### 3:35 PM – Mid-sized business, Karen Taylor DelPriore & Kelly Vincent

#### 3:40 PM – Large business, Jennifer Christopulos & Heather Brace

Brace reported the challenges this group identified:

- 1) Returning to work: returnship opportunities are needed
- 2) Lack of career development opportunities: Trainings, conferences, etc. usually take place in urban areas
- 3) Paid family leave
- 4) Rising housing costs are affecting every single business's recruitment
- 5) Flexibility: Pandemic practices have not all stuck
  - a) Early morning meetings can easily be moved to accommodate school drop-off
- 6) Aspiring to leadership positions without the support of a mentor
- 7) Childcare
- 8) Taxes: married people taxed less than individuals

Escamilla mentioned tax credits that benefit families with young children. Income tax in Utah is a flat tax rate, but we can have staff check the state's tax policies to make sure. She mentioned working with the federal delegation.

She went on to say that it is difficult and sometimes dangerous (referring to taking meetings on the phone during drop-off, as an example) to multitask—and it means that we are not 100% present at work or as parents.

#### 3:45 PM – Apprenticeships Report, Concetta Defa

Concetta Defa reported on her meeting with the Utah Commissioner of Apprenticeships, Scott Romney, and the State Director for the Department of Labor, Patsy Miller. She mentioned conflicts between federal regulations and state laws. The group also discussed the benefits of apprenticeships: less debt, the opportunity to “earn while you learn,” etc. Apprenticeships in manufacturing, healthcare, education will increase in the state soon; it is a growing trend.

Defa informed members of the possibility to create part-time apprenticeships. Scott and Patsy are happy to guide businesses through the process. Hunsaker clarified that this would only spread hours out over a longer period of time without lowering standards to require less hours.

Rep. Rosemary Lesser asked for examples of discrepancies in federal and state code. Defa said that HB 261 is one of the biggest challenges, as the Department of Labor standards require diversity outreach. Otherwise, standards should mostly line up.

Sen. Ann Millner added that Talent Ready Utah is leading a working group to develop a coordination plan on apprenticeships. They should have a work product in the next six months.

#### 3:50 PM – Results from 100 Businesses Championing Women, Hunsaker

Hunsaker shared the practices of the top 100 businesses ensuring they create a great environment for women to work. Highlights included flexibility and childcare support. This list can be a great motivator for leaders; there is something every company can do at a low cost.

Members discussed how companies are selected. Hunsaker and Escamilla commented that it is exciting to see how many companies are aiming for these goals and implementing better practices.

#### 3:55 PM – Updates on Legislation

Lisonbee informed the group that Rep. Mark Strong will be leading out on the childcare local ordinance legislation that has been discussed previously.

Millner reported that she is working on a bill that will help spouses of Department of Defense employees to update their licenses so they can get to work soon after being

relocated. She explained that it does not make sense to ask those who are only here for 2-3 years to complete extra requirements; we often put up unnecessary barriers.

Brace asked whether this will apply to nurses, and Millner said that it will. The language is currently very broad.

Lesser reminded the subcommittee of HB 462 Employee Compensation Amendments, which would codify a practice already common for state agencies: basing state employees' compensation on skill rather than previous pay. The bill ran out of time to get through the Senate in the 2024 session, but she plans to run it again with more time.

Escamilla plans to run SB 176 Child Care Services Amendments again, which would create a co-op between private businesses, child care providers, and the state.

She also mentioned career development legislation she is working on for the advancement of the childcare industry.

Hazlett asked whether there is a way to incorporate pay transparency in Lesser's bill. Hunsaker said that agencies, including GOPB, have implemented pay transparency. Lesser clarified that this legislation will focus on transparency regarding the pay range.

Brace asked whether this will address leaving previous compensation out of the application, and Lesser said this bill does exactly.

Lisonbee asked about the entities this will apply to, and Lesser said this will be state employees only.

#### 4:10 PM – Additional Discussion & Ideas

Defa asked when the childcare data being collected will be available. Hunsaker said it will be published in December.

#### 4:25 PM – Public comment

Jamie said she knows how difficult childcare is. She is not sure where her business fits as far as size.

Escamilla said this is challenging. The business model is currently not allowing for

Jamie said she understands that the industry is broken. The liability insurance issue affects costs.

Escamilla thanked her for what she is doing and acknowledged that this is a crisis.

Katie Martinez said that the teachers working at her high quality center are well trained but paid low wages. She just received her masters in childhood education and found that she had already learned much of what she was learning in class just working in the industry. It is a broken system. They do it because they love the kids and they love what they do, but something has to change.

Escamilla and Jamie discussed previous training incentive programs. Jamie said they are trying to keep the industry strong.

Brace brought up the matching grant in Kentucky and the co-op program in Boston. Escamilla said ideas like this will be included in the strategic plan.

Escamilla thanked everyone for their attendance.

4:30 PM – Adjourn