

**Testimony in Support of Full Funding of Universal Child Care Programs
in New York State**

**For the hearing of the
Joint Budget and Legislative Committees**

**Submitted to the
Human Services Committee**

February 03, 2026

Dear Chairwoman Senator Liz Krueger, Chairwoman Assemblymember Helene E. Weinstein, and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Tricia Lacy, and I am a parent residing in Brooklyn, NY. I am writing to strongly urge your full support and funding to deliver Universal Child Care to New York State.

When the second child arrived, the transition from "tight" to "impossible" happened almost overnight. We did the math, but the math didn't care about our reality. The cost of daycare for two children rose to meet—and then exceed—our mortgage. Suddenly, one entire paycheck was signed away before it even hit the bank account.

We told ourselves it was temporary—just a few years until they reached school age—but time moves slowly when you are drowning.

The Middle: The Two-Job Grind

To bridge the gap, my husband took on a second job. He became a ghost in our own home. He leaves before the kids wake up and returns long after they've been tucked in. Our ""partnership"" shifted from sharing a life to exchanging tactical texts about logistics and bills.

Even with the extra income, the math still didn't work. Gas prices rose, the car needed tires, and the kids didn't stop growing out of their shoes. We found ourselves standing in the grocery aisle, looking at the price of berries and putting them back. Fresh fruit became a luxury; the ""safety net"" became a memory.

The Breaking Point: The Plastic Bridge

The credit card debt didn't happen because of vacations or ""lifestyle creep." It happened because of the Tuesday when the checking account was at zero and the daycare tuition was due. It happened because the refrigerator broke, and we had no choice.

We started using the cards as a bridge, thinking we'd pay them off with the tax refund or a future bonus. But with interest rates hovering where they are, the bridge became a treadmill. We aren't just paying for childcare anymore; we are paying the bank for the privilege of having paid for childcare three months ago.

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The Present: The Weight of the "Hidden" Cost

Financially, the impact is visible in the balances and the late fees. But the real impact is the loss of ""what if.("")

- What if we could save for their college?
- What if we could afford a weekend away to remember who we are as a couple?
- What if an emergency happens tomorrow?

Every cent is spoken for before it is earned. We are living in a state of "financial breath-holding", waiting for the day the kids start public school so we can finally exhale. Until then, we keep the lanterns lit, the two jobs running, and the cards at the ready, doing the impossible work of buying a future we can currently barely afford to live in."

I urge the full funding of a statewide 3K and Pre-K Guarantee, and 2- Care in New York City to tackle the issue of Child Care Affordability.

Sincerely,

Patricia Lacy
Brooklyn, NY
Submitted via New Yorkers United for Child Care (united4childcare.org)