

A Tragically American Approach to the Child-Care Crisis ^[1]

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AVAILABILITY

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Excerpts

For a brief moment, it looked like America could get a real child-care system—one that wasn't defined by lengthy waitlists, sky-high fees, and crossed-fingers quality. When the House of Representatives passed the Build Back Better Act in 2021, it included \$400 billion in funding, part of which would have paid programs enough to boost providers' wages, in turn increasing the supply of available slots. The act also would have capped all but the wealthiest families' child-care bills at 7 percent of their income. This overhaul would have put child care squarely in the same category as Social Security, Medicare, and other guaranteed supports: It would have, in other words, become a right. Since Joe Manchin and 50 Republican senators killed the bill, however, many policy makers have started following a tired old playbook: If at first you fail to make something a universal right, try making it an employee benefit.

Region: United States ^[3]

Tags: child care policy ^[4]

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