March 14, 2019

X. HF2264 (Wazlawik) - Retaining early educators through attaining incentives now (REETAIN) grant program established, reports required, and money appropriated.

Mr. Chair & Committee members.

My name is Cyndi Cunningham. I have been a Licensed Family Child Care Provider in St. Paul for 20 years and am the current Public Policy Chairperson for Minnesota Child Care Provider Information Network (MCCPIN), a 501c3 sitewide association for Licensed Child Care Providers.

I am testifying in support of HF 2264 which extends the Federal REETAIN program to the state level.

Over the past few years, Child Care Providers have left the field in significant numbers leading to a ‘crisis’ as defined by the legislative bodies. There simply are not enough providers for what is needed by the public.

This session there have been many proposals to increase the number of providers and slots to address the crisis. There have also been proposals to fix the system of licensing.

We must also support those already in the field and stop the bleed of providers.

This bill is one approach which will assist in recognizing those in the profession and attempt to keep them such, i.e. REETAIN!

In the past the Federal program of REETAIN has been utilized in the state to give a grant to current providers. This grant can be applied for every-other year and has had limited funding so only a small percentage of providers have benefited.

HF2264 will expand the program so that more providers can benefit.

Minnesota can make a strong statement to providers that those currently in the profession are valued enough to want them to stay in the field.

Please support HF2264

Sincerely,

Cyndi Cunningham

MCCPIN Public Policy Chairperson

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