March 12, 2018

I am writing today in support of HF3403. My name is Heidi Highet and I am a child care provider from Rochester. My husband and I have been operating as a C3 for the past year. For a year prior to that, I had another adult on my license allowing us to operate as a C3. I have been licensed for over 12 years. When I operated as the sole provider, I could care for 10-12 children on my own, depending on how many infants I cared for. (2 of these being school age spots)

As a C3 with 2 full time adults, we can currently only have up to 14 children, 4 of those being school age. So the increase to 2 adults allows a little bit more flexibility in under age 2, but not in total numbers overall. Only 10 can be under school age.

This bill makes the biggest increase in the, desperately needed, infant and toddler age groups but also fairly allows more total children under school age.

The only consideration that needs to be looked at in the language of the bill is how many of the 17 spots would be allowed for under school age. I would suggest it be 2 or 3 of the spots. At that it would allow 6 under age 2, with no more than 4 being infants. 8 or 9 preschool and 2-3 school age children. Currently the language only addresses the under 2 category and the total capacity, not how they will be broken down between school age and preschoolers.

As a provider with many years of experience, I can assure you these are completely reasonable amounts of children for 2 trained adults to care for.

I know there are many providers who have looked at the option of expanding their program to a C3, but with the increased costs, couldn’t afford to do so with such a small increase in children.

This bill could go a long way towards fixing our severe shortage of infant and toddler care in this state. Especially if DHS/county licensing widely publicizes this change and helps existing providers expand their programs. This bill will make it financially feasible for providers to hire a second person (payroll, workman’s comp insurance and other additional expenses).

I also support the changes in this bill to the swaddling language as well as liability notification requirements.

Thank you for looking for real ways to solve our child care shortage. This bill could make a significant impact.

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