



## SCOTT COUNTY HEALTH and HUMAN SERVICES DIVISION

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PAM SELVIG  
Director

March 1, 2021

Representative Dave Pinto, Chair  
Early Childhood Finance and Policy Committee  
503 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

### **RE: Support for HF 1467 – Increase Access to Basic Sliding Fee Child Care**

Dear Chair Pinto and Members of the House Early Childhood Committee:

Thank you for hearing HF 1467 and thank you to Representative Pryor for chief authoring this bill. It addresses an issue that we continue to see year after year in Scott County, which is insufficient funding available to assist low income families in securing quality childcare, many of which are essential workers directly impacted by the pandemic. The Basic Sliding Fee (BSF) Child Care Program supports families who are determined to work by ensuring that children in the family can receive the benefit of childcare. By allowing for adequate access of BSF Child Care, families can also avoid turning to the Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) to receive support for childcare expenses.

HF 1467 simplifies the BSF Child Care Program by reordering the wait list priorities to increase the use of forecast funds. The proposal would reorganize the five existing categories within the BSF Child Care Program. Currently, counties are required to prioritize funding for families exiting MFIP. However, these families are already receiving childcare through the MFIP Child Care Program, which does not use BSF funds. This proposal would no longer require scarce BSF funds to be spent on these families until all other categories have been served, including veterans, and working poor families (which is the largest category for Scott County). Through this plan, more children would receive care and more families of workers who are desperately needed in the workforce would receive childcare assistance. This action will also increase county ability to maximize services by reducing the waiting list while minimizing risk to local county budgets.

Thank you for your consideration of this important legislation that will provide affordable and quality childcare to more working families at a time when it is so urgently needed. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Sincerely,

*Kari Ouimette*

Kari Ouimette, Economic Assistance Director

*An Equal Opportunity/Safety Aware Employer*