



10134 44th Court NE St. Michael, MN 55376

February 24, 2017

Dear Madam Chair and Members of the Subcommittee on Childcare Access and Affordability,

My name is Hollee Saville and I have been a licensed family childcare provider in St. Michael for 12 years. I have also worked in centers and public preschool and kindergarten programs. I am a trainer, consultant, and mentor for early childhood professionals and have a Master's in Early Childhood Education. Over the past 4 years especially, I have been disheartened by the increased vilification, over-regulation, paperwork, liability, and burdens placed on licensed family child care providers. However, HF1299, HF1300, HF1301, HF1306, HF1422, and HF604, will alleviate some of these burdens and improve the licensing system; I implore you to support these bills.

HF1299 would require DHS to notify providers, in addition to licensors, of any changes to licensing rules, statutes, policies, federal regulations, etc. Currently, many providers are issued correction orders for items that aren't in statute or rules, but based on DHS or licensor interpretations. Many licensors don't seem informed about legislative changes affecting family child care providers or share the info they receive from DHS, so this would ensure providers receive the info directly from DHS and prevent much of the confusion that is causing providers to leave our profession.

HF1300 clarifies that training requirements must be met by our licensing anniversary (or relicensing date), not based on the date they were taken. This would prevent confusion from licensors and providers about when trainings must be taken before they expire. In our current system, providers have to track multiple training dates from year to year. This would set our licensing anniversary as the deadline for trainings to be completed each year, a more efficient system for both licensors and providers. I support the proposed amendment to HF1300, too.

HF1301 would allow providers to post a revised correction order if DHS issues one, upon appeal. Providers are not currently required to post a correction order if it is fully reversed, upon appeal, but I do not mind that being in statute.

HF1306 is a long overdue relief for family child care providers who also provide foster care. With the severe shortage of foster care families in Minnesota, this is a fair and effective way to alleviate many of the financial burdens to foster care and might increase the number of family child care providers who provide foster care.

I support the "Fix-It Ticket" portion of HF1311 as it allows for efficient and safe improvements in family child care homes without wasting providers' or licensors' or time...and without vilifying providers through public correction orders. I support the proposed amendment to it, as well.

HF1422 would require DHS to be more accountable to both the Legislature and family child care

providers, plus work to improve the Family Child Care Licensing System. I support any efforts to improve transparency, clarity, streamline processes, and adopt the Task Force on Childcare Accessibility and Affordability recommendations.

HF604 would repeal the illegal and unconstitutional child care unionization bill. For more than 12 years, family child care providers have fought to keep unions out of their small businesses and homes. We are employers, not anyone's employees, so this law should have never been signed in the first place. Please support HF604 so the threat of childcare unionization is removed from Minnesota law.

I am opposed to HF1407. It seems to be throwing money at part of the problem, but it does not address the root causes of the lack of child care options. Also, a start-up manual for child care providers was funded through legislation last year; this does not seem much different. The problem is not getting child care businesses to open: the problem is keeping good providers from leaving the profession. I am somewhat offended by the proposal by Women Venture because it states a lack of business acumen as a reason for providers not succeeding, among other things. Having business acumen is not as important as having a love for children, something no amount of funding or legislation can provide. Instead of wantonly throwing money at the system, please make changes that cost little to no money and that fix the root of system. Government should not be picking winners and losers. Who would decide which two businesses would open? Would the union be receiving these funds? Center-based care is not the solution. Family child care offers much more affordable, flexible, and culturally sensitive care to meet the diverse needs of Minnesota families.

While I appreciate the assumed intent of HF1459, I am opposed to it because it would not improve the licensor training system, does not help ensure providers' rights, does nothing to address licensing inconsistency from county to county, and seems like it would create a more adversarial relationship between licensors and family child care providers. Also, DHS was allocated funding for 2 FTEs in 2013 for licensor training; the responsibilities listed in this bill were meant to be covered by that allocation. Therefore, I instead ask for your support of HF1508, which addresses licensor training and providers' rights and holds licensors accountable for their actions. It would improve the licensing system in myriad ways.

You have an awesome opportunity to fix a system that has worked against family child care providers and caused thousands of them to leave the field. When the liability, burdensome regulations, licensing inconsistencies, paperwork, and politics take as much time as our care for children, providers feel disheartened. That is why I ask for your support of HF1299, HF1300, HF1301, HF1306, HF1311, HF1422, and HF604.

Thank you for your consideration of these bills.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Hollie Saville".

Hollee Saville
Licensed Family Child Care Provider