



March 15, 2022

The Honorable Senator Abeler, Chair
Human Services Reform Finance and Policy Committee
95 University Ave West
Minnesota Senate Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

RE: Support for SF 3379 – Basic Sliding Fee Child Care

Dear Chair Abeler and Members of the Human Services Reform Finance and Policy Committee:

On behalf of Scott County, thank you for hearing SF 3379 and to Senator Wiklund for chief authoring this important legislation. Access to safe and affordable child care is a key component to a community that supports healthy families and a thriving workforce.

For several years, Scott County has had a waiting list for the Basic Sliding Fee (BSF) child care assistance program. Looking back over the last decade, it peaked at 230 in March 2012, and our monthly average number of families on the waiting list ranged from 172 in 2012 to 95 in 2020. Due to an increased funding allocation, Scott County was able to eliminate the waiting list and offer child care assistance to every eligible family as of January 2021. Access was increased even further when the 2021 legislature temporarily reordered the waiting list priorities.

The BSF child care assistance program provides a critical resource to parents trying to join or re-enter the workforce, while providing a safe and supportive learning environment for their children. Making the current prioritization permanent will allow counties to continue to serve families who would not otherwise have access to child care assistance. With a tight labor market and job vacancies at a record high, this is one important mechanism to increase labor force participation across Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Kari Ouimette

Economic Assistance Director, Scott County

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