



March 22, 2022

The Honorable Eric Pratt
Chair, Jobs and Economic Growth Finance & Policy
Minnesota Senate

Dear Chair Pratt and Committee Members:

I write today on behalf of the Minnesota Alliance of YMCAs to share our strong support for SF 3986 that creates a study of the early childhood education workforce.

As you are aware, the YMCA is one of the largest early childhood care providers in Minnesota. Our workforce depends on qualified teachers as we meet the guidelines by the state to serve infants to kindergarteners. The Y like many childcare providers are struggling to find teachers. We have many kids on waiting lists due to the shortage of teachers.

We support SF 3986. This study will help provide vital data around wages, income & benefits in the childcare industry along with barriers that kept prospective teachers from applying as well as retention of teacher data.

Here is an example of some of our daycare challenges. The Alexandria Area YMCA Child Care Centers serve 180 children each day across its two sites. In August 2021, leadership was forced to make the difficult decision to reduce childcare center operating hours, from 6 am - 6 pm to 7:30 am - 5:30 pm due to a shortage of qualified classroom staff. The ripple effect in the community was severe and felt from employers and employees alike. In February 2022, the center was finally able to recruit, hire and train enough qualified staff to build back to a normal operating schedule that working families depend on.

As you can see, a study will provide a picture of the challenges that the childcare industry is facing today.

We would appreciate your support of SF 3986.

Sincerely,

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