

April 26, 2023

Dear Minnesota Senate,

Thank you for the opportunity to present my concern regarding the Paid Family and Medical Leave bill. I appreciate your hard work in preparing this bill, but would like to present a thoughtful consideration for some of the hardships it could cause with ratio mandated industries, particularly child care. We have worked in child care for 10+ years. This industry requires state ratios that must always be met, with no exception, to provide a safe environment for young children. Infant classroom ratios are 1:4, Toddlers/Early Preschool 1:7 and Preschool/Pre-K are 1:10. As a larger center, we serve hundreds of families attending full time, Monday through Friday with available care from 6:30am-6pm. We pride ourselves on never violating state ratio requirements and providing exceptional care for the families in our community.

Our concern is that without an exemption for child care centers, we could be put in a position that we cannot meet the state ratio requirement and therefore must close classrooms until replacement teachers can be hired, and trained. In addition, we would attempt to hire additional staff, but would then need to raise tuitions to cover the additional expense. Our industry continues to be in a child care crisis with extreme difficulty in obtaining quality staff, especially lead teacher status as required by the Department of Human Services. Putting these demands on child care centers will not only cause unreliable care but make the staffing crisis for child care centers even worse.

Lastly, we have a concern on how this can negatively affect women in the workforce. Women have long been put on an inferior status for career positions because the parenting of young children typically falls on them. Without dependable care, they will have to sacrifice their careers. We see each day, parents who thrive when quality, and dependable child care is an option. We take great pride in our school and parents leave with confidence that their children are safe, loved and in an exceptional learning environment.

Thank you for your consideration.

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