



Northwest
Minnesota
FOUNDATION

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February 22, 2023

Senator Bobby Joe Champion
3401 Minnesota Senate Building
95 University Avenue West
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Chair Champion and members of the Senate Jobs and Economic Development Committee:

On behalf of the Northwest Minnesota Foundation, and also our rural communities, child care professionals, and families, I write today in strong support of SF1611.

SF1611 and the \$6 million investment for the Minnesota Initiative Foundations will provide us with the resources to continue our work helping and supporting communities, child care businesses, families, and employers. Currently, Northwest Minnesota needs more than 3,400 additional child care slots to meet the needs of families and employers. This crippling shortage is affecting the jobs parents can take, where families can live, and even family planning.

With prior funding support we've been able to help address this shortage by supporting communities and child care businesses. We've led and coordinated the Northwest Minnesota Child Care Collaborative which has assisted over 14 communities with exploring innovative child care solutions. We've supported child care professionals with professional development through the Parent Aware program. Since 2019, the number of Parent Aware-rated providers in our region has more than doubled.

With these much-needed resources we will be able to continue to lead and coordinate the Northwest Minnesota Child Care Collaborative, which helps communities identify and implement ways to address local child care shortages. We will also be able to provide child care businesses with technical assistance and professional development, helping them be successful businesses and improving the quality of their care of children.

We see the impact child care shortages are having in the region and we are honored that Governor Walz believes in the work we are doing and included this funding in his budget. Thank you for the trust you've shown us in the past. This investment will give us the resources needed to help our communities and our child care providers solve our unacceptable 3,400 child care slot deficit.

Thank you for hearing SF1611, and I urge you to make this investment this year.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen White".

Karen White
President/CEO