

February 28, 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:

Thank you for your consideration of SF1611 which would invest \$6 million in support of the Minnesota Initiative Foundations (MIFs) childcare work across 80 of our 87 counties. Each MIF is independent of each other, but we work collectively to address many of our communities' challenges and take advantage of the strengths of our people.

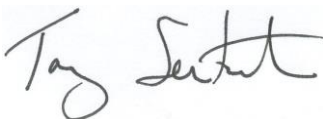
As we all know, our communities' vitality and economic success is directly tied to access to quality and affordable childcare.

As a regional foundation that has been working on issues of early care and education for almost 20 years, we have the relationships on the ground and the resources to meet communities and providers where they are and provide tailored assistance to their individual needs. Some of our work has included:

- Offering a community planning process in targeted sites to help develop a community solution action plan, as well as provide other support for the start-up, expansion, and stabilization of childcare. (We have been working actively with East Range, Floodwood, and in the past we have worked with Sliver Bay, Chisholm/Hibbing).
- Providing and supporting individual and/or group financial and business development assistance for family and center-based childcare.
- Developing and holding locally based and regional high-quality training sessions and other supports to enhance program quality for childcare providers in northeastern Minnesota.
- Undertaking a comprehensive effort to help recruit, retain, and stabilize the childcare workforce including the development of a Child Care Talent Pipeline Workgroup and Child Care Workforce Solutions Pilot Project.
- Encouraging new and existing childcare providers to earn, maintain, and/or increase a Parent Aware Quality Rating.

The Northland Foundation has been able to use prior investments from the state to help support several childcare efforts across our seven counties and five tribal nations. We have hosted 32 in-person and virtual training sessions engaging 1,169 childcare providers in a variety of program quality and business acumen topics; provided 150 of tailored technical assistance to 14 childcare programs; helped 81 childcare programs earn, maintain, or increase their Parent Aware rating; created 286 new childcare slots; and convened 59 partner meetings to facilitate information-sharing and coordinate childcare resources in the region.

Thank you again for your consideration,



Tony Sertich
President/CEO