



February 21, 2023

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

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

On behalf of West Central Initiative and all the families who call our region home, I write today in strong support of SF1611.

SF1611 will invest \$6 million in the Initiative Foundations to:

- Help communities identify and implement ways to address local childcare shortages;
- Provide technical assistance to childcare providers looking to remain in the industry, and child care entrepreneurs looking to enter the industry;
- Help more providers to participate in the state's childcare quality program, Parent Aware; and
- Foster innovation in Greater Minnesota, to help find the next solution to our more than 42,000 child care slot deficit.

To envision what impact the Initiative Foundations can have in the future, here is what West Central Initiative has accomplished with your previous investment.

- ✓ Over the last two years, we continued building a Child Development Association (CDA) certification system within west central Minnesota and integrated it with state and national systems, building this effort into an early care and education career pathway.
- ✓ We supported the work of First Children's Finance to facilitate innovative community childcare solutions and provided funding for the communities to move their childcare solutions forward.
- ✓ We awarded five community-based grants of \$15,000 each annually for a community to hire a project manager to move their child care initiatives forward. Applicants were current communities working with First Children's Finance and/or past participants. To qualify, the community had to have a community-based, childcare plan.
- ✓ We provided funding for CAPLP Child Care Aware to provide free trainings.

SF1611 will give the Initiative Foundations the resources to continue to help our communities and our child care providers solve our unacceptable 42,000 child care slot deficit.

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

With kind regards,

Anna M. Wasescha, Ph.D.  
President

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