

To whom it may concern:

My name is Nicole Flick, and I am in support of this bill as a licensed child care center provider in Minnesota. I have been working in the Early Childhood field for 19 years, owning my center for 8 years. This bill (HF367-SF610) allows the provider to use their best judgment when it comes to immunizations and the children in their care.

When you ask a provider what the worst thing that could happen to a child under their care, the answer would be a communicable disease outbreak, even before death. The liability on all the other children in your care versus the one, has to take precedent.

I have been through this scenario, I had a parent who chose not to vaccinate and she called me one day and told me she "thinks her child has measles" I instantly went into survival mode letting all my parents know and getting on the phone with the MN Department of Health. In this instance the only thing I could do to prevent all my little infants from attracting the disease was to "watch them for symptoms" . By this time my parents were furious I had allowed this to happen (I was just following the religious exemption law), and several terminated care that same day, I lost thousands of dollars in monthly tuition. Turned out it was not measles but hand, foot and mouth which the doctor got wrong as this family didn't see a licensed physician, they sought out a naturopathist. Thankfully, it was only a small virus, but still all my infants attracted it and were still out for a week.

As a provider who lives this life day in and day out, we need to be able to make sure the children in our care are safe from diseases that could kill them and the parents enrolling their children expect us to keep their child safe. Parents have every right to enroll their child in any program they see fit. However, I as the provider should have the right to choose if I want to take the risk of having unvaccinated children in the same building as infants whose parents cannot yet vaccinate due to age. The risk to young infants who cannot be immunized and attracting a disease like measles could not only create a new pandemic but the death toll would be outright dangerous and preventable.

We all know the science behind vaccines. We all also understand the parents' right to religion and their choice on how to raise their children. However, when their choice can affect how other children live or die, we have to be real. I should have rights as a private care provider as well, within the laws of course.

Fully funding childcare would give the state the right to keep this law, however since there are no plans to do that, we are private small businesses, not schools.

Thank you for reading,

Nicole Flick



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