

LEAD & CARE

Association of Family Child Care Professionals



Partnering with Providers, Supporting Family Child Care Businesses

Leadandcaremn.org

publicpolicy@leadandcaremn.org

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RE: SF1629 (Hauschild, Bolden) Unrelated individual providing child care to two families exemption from licensure provision

Madam Chair and Committee Members:

My name is Cyndi Cunningham. I have been a Licensed Family Child Care Provider in St. Paul for 27 years and am the current Public Policy Chairperson for Lead & Care, a 501c3 statewide association for Licensed Child Care Providers.

I am testifying on behalf of Lead & Care **opposing SF1629** as written, which changes legally unlicensed care from one unrelated family to two (2) unrelated families. This bill does much more than support nanny sharing or other unregulated care settings. This bill will contribute to the demise of Family Child Care. Many will consider closing and moving to the two (2) unrelated families and other ripple effects.

There is a child care crisis which has led to families attempting to find care in any manner possible.

The state has historically stated that Minnesota needs high quality, regulated and affordable care. Those three words have complicated the landscape and have contributed to the crisis because of piecemeal decisions. It also is complicated to balance those three goals to lead to available care.

Legally unlicensed settings can care for an unlimited number of related family members and currently one (1) unrelated family with the ability to **utilize CCAP payments**. These settings are critical in the areas of culture and non-traditional hours, i.e. evening and weekend care. These settings, however, are unregulated, no quality standards nor safety standards for children in care, unless supporting families by accepting CCAP funding, then there are a few expectations for safety standards.

There are no reports or data on the care for these children, the safety, injuries or quality that they receive. What is happening in these settings?

There already is little enforcement of any settings functioning outside of the legally unlicensed. It is only a misdemeanor if the setting advertises. I can attest that even with billboard advertising for care, the counties and state do nothing to ensure compliance with the law. If there is expansion maybe the penalty needs to be increased.

Licensed Family Child care is typically not an option for families for non-traditional hours as licensing constricts our ability to provide this care. Many would like to provide extended care and can not.

Reports keep saying that children are not ready for school. This has led to increased regulations being layered on licensed programs, pushes for school-based programs.

Then the pendulum swing to proposals of no regulations and changes in ratios are being offered to attempt to deal with the shortages.

However, the question of what the children's preschool experiences have been being cared for is not being asked. Why are children unprepared?

There needs to be a systemic view by the state to look at the child care system in Minnesota, evaluating what the state wants to prioritize and how settings impact availability in other settings.

Consistency is needed in implementing the state's priorities. This bill isn't consistent with other priorities the state has put forth.

Each silo presented impacts other settings and the goal of the state.

Is the state investing in quality care for children or reverting to unregulated casual care?

Is the state going to continue to provide funding such as CCAP to unregulated settings?

If these are actions that the state wants to take, then there needs to be a lifting of regulations and expectations that children are 'prepared for school' and reduction of preschool focus.

We appreciate the efforts by Sen Hauschild & Sen Bolden to continue to find a solution to the struggles of families and those providing care to their children. **We would like to engage in discussion of these solutions.**

Cyndi Cunningham

Lead & Care Public Policy Chairperson

651-470-4857