

My name is Kayley Spencer, and I am the Director of Lakeside Early Learning, a childcare center in Duluth, Minnesota. I am here in support of SF2135, which takes important steps toward reforming the childcare licensing system.

While regulations are essential to ensuring health and safety, the current system often penalizes providers for minor, technical mistakes that have no bearing on child safety or well-being. For example, this past summer we received a citation for a clerical error on a staff person's orientation record. The staff member had completed all necessary training prior to caring for children, but due to missing the date of a training and a signature on the form, it resulted in a citation.

During an earlier visit, a teacher was required to remove their entire play kitchen from their classroom for a missing knob. The missing piece did not leave any sharp edges or hazards and was simply cosmetic. Yet again, it resulted in a citation that stated "program materials were not in good repair".

I have dedicated my career to providing high-quality care for children, and I am deeply passionate about creating an environment that is both safe and welcoming. However, the current licensing system often distracts us from this mission by focusing on technicalities that have little to no impact on child safety. Instead of penalizing providers over small, non-safety-related issues, we need a system that fosters collaboration, provides clear guidance, and supports continuous growth. A system where we can focus on what truly matters- ensuring children's

well-being and giving our teachers the tools they need to succeed. SF2135 is an important step in the right direction, and I urge the committee to support it.

Thank you for your time and consideration.