

# LEAD & CARE

Association of Family Child Care Professionals



## Partnering with Providers, Supporting Family Child Care Businesses

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March 19, 2024

RE: HF4163 (Norris) Farm to institutions funding provided, and money appropriated.

To: Agriculture Finance and Policy Committee

Committee Chair and members:

I am Cyndi Cunningham, Licensed Family Childcare provider in St. Paul for 25+ years. Personally, I serve children from 6 weeks of age through 10 years. We have a focus on nature, gardening, fresh foods and local sourcing. Parents comment that children in my care are open to foods that at home they would not have offered, had access to nor a positive response from their children.

I also serve as the public policy chairperson of the state association for licensed family childcare, Lead & Care (formerly known as MCCPIN). ([leadandcaremn.org](http://leadandcaremn.org))

I am writing to support HF4163 which aims to include home based licensed childcare previously not named in legislation.

It is critically important to support all programs serving children, in this case, those who are working to serve locally sourced food.

Children become open to new foods, fresh foods and local foods when care providers have the financial support to provide said foods. Even in the metro area, I benefit from farmers and producers of products through farmers markets and other resources. My 'city kids' do not always have this connection and this financial support will ensure we can make these connections.

Not all programs have the financial ability to source local food. Food costs have risen in price and without such support many providers will not be in the position to offer the fresh and amazing farm connection which can be purchased.

Please support this bill, including family childcare, to benefit children and the ag community.

Sincerely,

Cyndi Cunningham  
373 Idaho Ave W.  
St. Paul, MN 55117  
Lead & Care Public Policy Chairperson