



March 2, 2026

Dear Members of the House State Government Finance and Policy Committee,

On behalf of Think Small, I am writing to express our support for H.F. 3480, which directs a nonpartisan entity to conduct an economic impact study of Operation Metro Surge, including its effects on child care providers. This bill aligns directly with Think Small's mission to advance quality care and education of children in their crucial early years by ensuring the child care sector is stable, sustainable, and able to meet children's needs.

To better understand emerging impacts on our local child care system, Think Small recently conducted a small-scale survey of child care programs across the seven-county metro area. From December 2025 to February 2026, 27% programs reported experiencing increases in child absences, 35% saw declining enrollments, and 27% experienced unexpected program closure days, with many stating these impacts were directly related to Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) activity. These findings, while limited in scope, point to additional strain on already fragile programs and highlight how enforcement activities can affect children's continuity of care, family stability, and the broader regional economy.

Our survey represents a snapshot, but clearly demonstrates the effects of Operation Metro Surge on child care providers and families. A comprehensive, nonpartisan economic impact study, as envisioned in H.F. 3480, is essential to understand the full scope of the impacts, quantify the costs to providers, families, employers, and communities, and inform policy responses going forward.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue and for your continued commitment to supporting young children, their families, and the early childhood workforce. Please contact us with any questions or if we can be helpful as H.F. 3480 moves forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cisa Keller". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "C".

Cisa Keller
President and CEO, Think Small