



Carver County
Health and Human Services

Human Services Building

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April 5, 2022

The Honorable Representative Dave Pinto
Chair, Early Childhood Finance and Policy Committee
503 State Office Building, St Paul MN 55155
RE: Support for HF 4735, Omnibus Bill-Basic Sliding Fee Child Care

Dear Chair Pinto and Members of the House Early Childhood Committee:

On behalf of Carver County, thank you for supporting the Basic Sliding Fee Child Care Bill (HF 4735 Omnibus Bill) and thank you to Representative Pryor for chief authoring this important legislation. Access to safe and affordable childcare is a key component to building a foundation that supports a thriving workforce, invests in economic prosperity, and creates vibrant communities, as well as fulfills employer needs and keeps businesses open. The Basic Sliding Fee (BSF) Child Care Program is a tool to support parents who are striving and ready to access the workforce for the first time or are returning to the workforce post COVID-19 pandemic. Many parents are eager to accept much needed entry level jobs while they continue to work with local CareerForce centers and programs to gain skills needed to develop their own career path forward. Prior to the temporary re-prioritization of Basic Sliding Fee Child Care, Carver County had a wait list varying from 50 to 150 families. The 2021 MN Legislature increased funding allocations for the BSF program and temporarily reordered wait list priorities. Due to this legislative support, Carver County has been able to reach out to all families on the wait list and offer support and job search assistance to the parents who also need childcare. Currently, Carver County does not have a wait list and is able to meet the needs of parents who are eager to enter the workforce. If the reprioritization had not happened, many of these families would still be on the wait list, despite increased funding for the BSF program. The BSF Child Care Program is crucial to enabling more parents to join the workforce while providing a safe and supportive learning environment for their children. The BSF Child Care Program helps families to secure employment and diverts them from long-term reliance on Public Assistance Programs. Making the current prioritization permanent will allow counties to continue to serve more families who would not otherwise have access to childcare assistance, support healthy development of children, and divert families from entering Public Assistance Programs.

Thank you for your support of this important legislation. Please do not hesitate to reach out directly to me with questions or to the Carver County Economic Supports and Workforce Development Manager, Kate Probert Fagundes at kprobert@co.carver.mn.us, who had the honor of testifying in the support of the bill.

Respectfully,

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