

Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage
658 Cedar Street, Suite G57
St. Paul, MN 55155
cmah@state.mn.us | 651-757-1750

March 3, 2026

Co-Chair: Rep. Nolan West 32A
Co-Chair: Rep. Carlie Kotyza-Witthuhn 49B
Co-Vice Chair: Rep. Nathan Nelson 11B
Co-Vice Chair: Rep. Jessica Hanson 55A;
and Members of the House Children and Families Finance and Policy Committee

RE: Testimony in Support of HF 3415 – Child Care Center Facility Access

Co-Chair Rep. Carlie Kotyza-Witthuhn, Co-Chair Rep. Nolan West, and Members of the Committee:

The Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage appreciates the opportunity to submit this letter of support for **HF 3415**, a bill that establishes clear requirements and limitations on federal immigration enforcement access to licensed childcare centers in Minnesota. We urge the committee to advance this bill.

Why HF 3415 Matters for Children’s Safety

Childcare centers are designed to be safe, stable environments where children can learn and grow without fear. HF 3415 reinforces that purpose by requiring federal agents to present valid identification, a written statement of purpose, and a judicial warrant before entering a childcare facility. These safeguards ensure that children are not exposed to unnecessary trauma or intimidation and that staff can maintain a secure environment consistent with their licensing responsibilities.

Impact on African Heritage Families

Minnesotans of African heritage include long-established communities, immigrants, refugees, and mixed-status families. Many rely on childcare centers to participate in the workforce and maintain family stability. When families fear that routine childcare activities could expose them to immigration enforcement, they may withdraw from essential services, reduce work hours, or isolate themselves from community support. HF 3415 helps prevent these harms by providing clarity, due process, and consistent expectations for all families.

Supporting Providers and Upholding Minnesota Values

Childcare providers are not trained immigration agents. HF 3415 gives them clear, legally grounded procedures to follow if federal agents request access to their facilities. This protects

providers from liability, ensures compliance with state and federal law, and preserves the integrity of childcare environments.

Minnesota has long affirmed the importance of dignity, fairness, and safety for all residents. HF 3415 aligns with these values by ensuring that federal enforcement actions occur only with proper legal authority and without regard for children's well-being.

Conclusion

For these reasons, the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage respectfully urges the House Children and Families Finance and Policy Committee to support **HF 3415** and move it forward. This legislation strengthens child safety, supports family stability, and upholds Minnesota's commitment to justice and community well-being.

Thank you for your attention and for your continued work on behalf of Minnesota's children and families.

Sincerely,

Linda Sloan | Executive Director
Lolita Davis Carter | Legislative & Policy Director
Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage

The Minnesota Legislature empowered the Council for Minnesotans of African Heritage to ensure that people of African heritage fully and effectively participate in and equitably benefit from the State of Minnesota's political, social, and economic resources, policies, and procedures. Generally, the Council is charged with the responsibility of:

- *Advising the Governor and the Legislature on issues confronting People of African Heritage;*
- *Advising the Governor and the Legislature on statutes, rules, and revisions to programs to ensure that Black people have access to benefits and services provided to people in Minnesota;*
- *Serving as a liaison to the federal government, local government units, and private organizations on matters relating to People of African Heritage in Minnesota;*
- *Implementing programs designed to solve problems of People of African Heritage when authorized by statute, rule, or order; and*
- *Publicizing the accomplishments of People of African Heritage and their contributions to the state.*

Hannah Ramer
[HF3415](#) – in support

March 3, 2026

Dear Chair Carlie Kotyza-Witthuhn, and members of the Children and Families Finance Policy Committee,

I am writing in support of [HF3415](#) to strictly limit on immigration enforcement actions near schools and daycares. This is essential to protect Minnesota families and the dedicated educators who care for our children.

Since December, a third of my daughter's Kindergarten classmates aren't coming to school because it is not safe for their families to bring them. This extreme disruption **exacerbates educational disparities and inflicts a severe emotional toll**. For the students still at school, the staff have worked hard to foster a sense of calm, normalcy and safety. Despite their heroic efforts, in late January my daughter told me **"I feel safe when I'm at home, but at school, I think about what if we see ICE? I think about it all the time. I can't stop thinking about it."** More recently, my Kindergartener asked if she could have her own whistle in case she saw ICE. **Our kindergarteners should be playing and learning, not planning what do to if they encounter armed federal agents at school.**

My 2-year old son attends a Spanish-immersion daycare, and his teachers are skilled, hardworking, and incredibly caring. Despite their legal status, they fear being targeted by immigration agents because of patterns of racial profiling and violent tactics. Furthermore, many staff have loved ones who have been detained, and are struggling with grief, uncertainty, and financial hardship. The teachers continue to show up every day with genuine warmth and love for my child despite the terror of Operation Metro Surge. The psychic toll is immense. **At baseline, their work is incredibly demanding and woefully undercompensated in our society. They should not also have to fear being targeted by federal agents while caring for children.**

Like many other parents, I have stretched myself to give rides, participate in school patrols, and contribute money for groceries, rent, and other living expenses. It has been a sacrifice for my family, though it is dwarfed by the burden borne by the children, families, and educators terrorized by Metro Surge.

Safety is a necessary precondition for learning and healthy development. We must protect children, families, and educators from the threat of immigration enforcement.

Sincerely,



Hannah Ramer

Thank you for this opportunity to express my support for a bill that will prohibit ICE from persecuting individuals at childcare centers, as well as share my experience in January and February during the Federal government's ICE invasion of the Twin Cities. I am Leah Retamozo, the CEO & Founder of Bilingual Child Care & Education Center. I have two early learning centers that I have developed over the last 15 years in the metro area. We provide Spanish Immersion early learning for families with children from Infancy through kindergarten. We provide essential childcare services for over 300 parents in the metro, who rely on us for their children's care and developmental learning while they work. Our parents make a variety of contributions in their jobs throughout the metro area, and we make their success possible, allowing them peace of mind while they work knowing their children are well-cared for and thriving! What is more, we are helping parents to raise bilingual children who will grow up with a sense of respect, admiration, and value for other cultures – something this country is sorely lacking!

It seems incredible that a bill like this is even necessary - a bill that will prohibit our federal government from illegally trespassing, harassing, and abducting hard working Americans and legal immigrants from their place of work at child care centers – where vulnerable children spend their days. But, here we are. We live in a country being run by multiple individuals at the highest level of government and business who have connections to the most heinous child sex trafficking ring our world has likely ever witnessed. Our children NEED OUR PROTECTION from these monsters.

As a private business owner, I would like to assert that every person who works for me has a legal I-9 form on file, and is legally authorized to live and work in this country. In fact, many have endured ridiculous, costly and bureaucratic processes that span for years so that they can simply work and build a life. I would like to take a moment to draw attention to asylum seekers, who come to this country escaping a variety of difficult circumstances, often with roots in US meddling in their governments and the extraction of their natural resources. Are you aware that as these individuals jump hoops, pay fees, and struggle to follow complex immigration processes, they are often asked to wear ankle bracelets – the same ones convicts on parole wear. It is disgusting. The United States should be a place of safety, compassion, and refuge. But that is not who we are anymore. This corrupt maga/trump/gop administration is racist and cruel. They are responsible for the circumstances we endured the last several months with operation metro surge.

I'd like to share what the last few months have been like for my employees and the families who attend our centers. The day before Renee Good was executed, two of my staff were harassed by ICE at their child's bus stop, one of whom was detained and suffered a medical emergency, and as such was transported to the hospital. Knowing what was coming, we had a community meeting planned for the next week, but following Renee Good's death, we closed for two days

so that we could urgently come together as a community to develop a safety plan for our staff that included safe transportation to and from work, parent volunteers observers guarding our doors, and a variety of protocols for keeping children and staff safe in the event of ICE entering our facilities. We also developed a rapid response group and communication groups so that we could mobilize quickly where we were needed.

Over the next two months, every single staff member was transported to and from work by volunteer parents and the entrances to our centers were guided by multiple parents with vests and whistle. We asked the local police for help and support. They generally refused to acknowledge nor did they educate themselves about what was happening in our communities. For nearly two months, we were harassed and intimidated by ICE vehicles circling our buildings, parking in our lots in unmarked cars and plain clothes that we identified through local groups tracking those vehicles. We mounted rapid responses on several occasions to the homes of our staff where ICE were also intimidating people. Several of our staff had family members who were abducted from their homes. We successfully mounted legal responses and were able to bring each of those individuals home, but after several weeks of unlawful detention. When not at work, our staff stayed at home, did not drive anywhere, and our families made sure their basic needs were met in so many generous and compassionate ways. To the credit of our community, we maintained our centers functional and each person on our staff remained safe. It was a terrifying gut-wrenching period of time for everyone, not knowing when or where we might be assaulted from our vehicles, homes, and work. I remain so disappointed in our leadership and law enforcement that they completely abandoned us and let ICE run rampant through our streets. They are still here and need to be stopped and held accountable, and at a MINIMUM, pass this bill to keep these untrained criminal ICE THUGS away from our kids!!!



March 4, 2026

Children & Families Finance & Policy Committee

HF3415 / SF3616: Access to child care facilities limited.

Dear Chairs Kotyza-Witthuhn, West, Members of the Children & Families Committee,

Minnesota's Prenatal to Three Coalition (PN-3) is writing to express our support for HF3415, to limit how federal agents access child care spaces and maintain safe learning environments for infants and young children. Child care providers are being significantly impacted by the increased number of federal agents in Minnesota and the manner in which immigration policies have been enforced in front of young children.

Minnesota's already strained child care workforce is being forced to develop and enact their own protocols on how to respond to unidentified agents arriving at their place of work, without warrant or expressed purpose. Out of fear of violent interactions with federal agents, infant and early child care providers have observed an overall decrease in participation in their programs and increased stress on providers, families, and young children.

HF3415 establishes clear expectations for federal agents to follow when enforcing immigration policy in child care spaces, and prioritizes the care and safety of our youngest children in Minnesota.

The experiences a child witnesses and the bonds developed between a caregiver and baby during the first three years of life will impact the foundation of all future learning. Please preserve early care and learning spaces and join us in supporting HF3415.

Thank you for taking measures to keep our babies, toddlers, and families safe.

Alisha Porter,
Children's Defense Fund-Minnesota, Director
Minnesota Prenatal to Three Coalition, Chair

Nancy Jost,
Early Childhood Advisor
Minnesota Prenatal to Three Coalition, Chair

HF3415: Access to child care center facilities limited

Committee members,

I continue to see my neighbors be terrorized by the federal agents in Minnesota. As a South Minneapolis resident, I have been participating in ICE watch outside a daycare to keep staff, parents, and children safe from immigration police. While I am proud to step up and protect my neighbors, it is truly absurd that this is now necessary for childcare to be safe in our community. I support HF3415 to strengthen the legal framework to keep child care centers.

Your fellow Minnesotan,
Aaron Peterson

Testimony Supporting HF3415

Pastor Sergio Amezcua

DHH Church | DHH Operation

Minneapolis, Minnesota

Chair Kotyza-Witthuhn and members of the committee,

My name is Pastor Sergio Amezcua. I am a leader with Unidos MN and I serve as pastor of DHH Church in Minneapolis and director of DHH Operation, where we support thousands of families across the Twin Cities each week.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HF3415.

In our work, we see every day that families thrive when children feel safe in the places meant to care for them. Child care centers exist to protect, educate, and nurture children. They should be spaces where kids can learn and grow without fear or disruption.

HF3415 helps reinforce that.

This bill does not interfere with lawful federal enforcement. It simply sets clear, reasonable standards when agents seek access to child care facilities—requiring valid identification, a stated purpose, and a judicial warrant. These safeguards help ensure that children's environments remain stable while still respecting the law.

Children in these settings are among the most vulnerable in our communities. They cannot advocate for themselves. It is our responsibility to make sure their spaces remain safe and focused on their well-being.

Minnesota has long valued family stability, child safety, and responsible governance. HF3415 reflects those values by putting common-sense protections in place.

As a pastor and community leader, I see how much families are working to build better futures for their children. Policies like this help create the secure, predictable environments kids need to thrive.

I respectfully urge your support for HF3415.

Thank you for your time and service.

from: Katie Hamel <k.hamel1413@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, March 4, 2026 7:19 AM
To: Ryann Woods <Ryann.Woods@house.mn.gov>
Subject: Disallow federal agents access to childcare facilities

To whom it may concern,

Federal agents should not be allowed to access childcare facilities. Childcare facilities should have a perimeter around them that federal agents are not allowed to cross. Immigration and customs enforcement (ICE) agents have demonstrated that they are incapable of rational or logical reasoning and they put everyone around them at risk. When it comes to childcare centers they put those caring for children and the children at risk of bodily harm or death. This is an unacceptable potential outcome and they should be barred from being near the area or any childcare centers.

Please do the right thing and disallow federal agents access to childcare facilities.