



March 3, 2022

Chair Fue Lee  
House Capital Investment Committee  
485 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St Paul, MN 55155

Re: HF 3169 (L. Olson) Greater Minnesota Child Care Grant Program

Chair Lee and members of the committee,

The Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) appreciates the opportunity to share written testimony on behalf of our nearly 30,000 members in support of H.F. 3169 which will appropriate \$10 million for the Greater Minnesota Child Care grant program.

While the vitality of our rural communities has long been a priority issue for Farm Bureau, access to childcare has become an important piece of that issue. Especially as the way we live and work has changed so drastically over the last few years, people are choosing to move to our rural communities. However, without access to reliable childcare in these communities, families are not able to make these places home. Access to childcare is absolutely a critical component of the future of rural Minnesota.

We recognize that this a complicated issue- how do you safely provide affordable childcare in the right numbers yet allow these businesses to be profitable business? However, the grant program for rural childcare is an important piece of this puzzle.

The availability of childcare in greater Minnesota is our most urgent concern. A county Farm Bureau leader from Pope County has provided in home daycare for 15 years. During her tenure, their county has lost half of the LFCC providers. There were 35 providers in the county when she was first licensed, and now there are just 17. In terms of actual childcare spots - Pope County has lost over 180 childcare spots in the last 15 years. The Pope County example is not unique- we are seeing this across rural Minnesota.

The Greater Minnesota Childcare grant program is an important step in providing support for rural childcare providers to ensure that our communities can continue to be a place to work and raise a family.

We appreciate Representative Olson for bringing this bill forward.

Sincerely,

Dan Glessing  
President

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