



February 17, 2020

Representative Dave Pinto and Members, House Early Childhood Finance and Policy Division
Minnesota House of Representatives
439 State Office Building
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Representative Pinto and Honorable Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on House File 1, The Great Start for All Minnesota Children Act. The Minnesota Budget Project supports policy changes to make Minnesota a place where all can thrive, including investments in public services that expand opportunity, narrow racial disparities, and improve the economic well-being of lower-income Minnesotans. We are especially pleased that House File 1 includes a significant investment in the Child Care Assistance Program, also known as CCAP.

The Minnesota Budget Project **strongly supports additional investments in Child Care Assistance. Affordable, dependable child care supports family economic security by allowing parents to work while their kids thrive in a safe and nurturing environment, and helps employers find and keep workers.** CCAP serves kids from birth to age 12, allows families to find care at all times of the day and all days of the week, and is available in every Minnesota county.

However, for too many Minnesota families, child care is out of reach due to high costs, lack of available spaces, and long waiting lists for Child Care Assistance. While over 30,000 Minnesota kids have affordable care thanks to CCAP, there are still more than 1,700 families on waiting lists unable to secure reliable care that meets their needs. We strongly support the following ongoing goals:

- Expanded investment in Child Care Assistance to serve more families.
- Increased provider reimbursement rates so more families across the state can choose the provider that best meets their needs.

We share in the goals of expanding opportunity and economic security to all Minnesotans, and creating a broad and durable prosperity in our state. House File 1 sets out an important vision of the kinds of investments needed to reach these goals, and is an important down payment towards ensuring all Minnesota kids and families can succeed. Please contact me at bhammer@mnbudgetproject.org or 651-757-3065 if there is any additional information that would be helpful to you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Betsy Hammer".

Betsy Hammer
Policy Advocate