

April 5, 2022  
Representative Dave Pinto  
Chair, House Early Childhood Finance and Policy Committee

Chair Pinto and Members of the House Early Childhood Finance and Policy Committee,

On behalf of Think Small, we are writing in support of HF 4735. At Think Small we believe that a strong, equitable child care and early learning system not only benefits children, families, and early educators, but also keeps parents in the workforce, increases racial equity and strengthens the economy for everyone. That is why our nonprofit organization's Strategic Plan goal is that all children in Minnesota are ready for kindergarten. We are excited to see many policies included in this bill to help our state reach this goal.

Thank you for increasing investments in Early Learning Scholarships. This will help more children access quality care that meets the needs of their families. We support the expansion to ages 0-3 and really appreciate the addition of children of incarcerated parents as a priority group. As scholarships expand to serve more infants and toddlers, we would like to revisit the cap to make sure it covers the true cost of care.

We are generally supportive of an increase in rates for Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP). But we have concerns about additional increases that are not intentionally linked to participation in Minnesota's Quality Rating and Improvement System, Parent Aware. Research is clear on the benefits of a quality early care and education program, and our children deserve these benefits.

As participants on the Transforming the Early Childhood Workforce Workgroup, we are working on ways to support early childhood educators. We support the early childhood workforce study, as this information will help policymakers and us make better decisions. We would like to see that component included in this bill.

Finally, thank you for including improvements to Information Technology and data systems. This will improve coordination across agencies that oversee early childhood programs.

Thank you again for your work to support young children and families in our state. We look forward to continuing to work with you. Please contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,



Barbara Yates  
President and CEO, Think Small