



February 22, 2021

Mr. Chair and Committee Members:

I am Nancy Jost, Director of Early Childhood at West Central Initiative based in Fergus Falls and I am writing in support of tax credits for the child care workforce.

Tax credits for child care professionals are a great benefit because the child care workforce's wages are usually abysmally low. We have a child care shortage, and one of the reasons for this shortages is the wages. A tax credit would help the child care professionals' bottom line and may help keep them in the field.

Linking Parent Aware ratings with tax credits makes sense because we want to make sure our taxes are being used for high-quality child care and education that is helping children get ready for school and life. Rural children and families deserve high-quality care and education, as well as every child and family in our state. Some are saying this will not work in rural Minnesota because we do not have enough Parent Aware rated family and center programs. I think rather than looking at it this way, we should look at ways to support and increase the number of Parent Aware rated family and center programs in rural Minnesota so they can take advantage of these tax credits. Our children deserve high-quality care and education, and our child care workforce deserves to make a worthy wage.

Sincerely,

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