



February 28, 2022

Representative Dave Pinto
Chair, Early Childhood Finance and Policy Committee
503 State Office Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Pinto and Members of the Committee:

Voices and Choices for Children Coalition requests your support for HF 3591. Approximately 40% of infants and toddlers and 25% of children ages 3-5 years old are cared for by family, friends, and neighbors (FFN)¹ in Minnesota. We expect these numbers have likely increased throughout the public health emergency these past two years.

While most families struggle to pay for childcare, certain families are hit harder by the cost and shortage of childcare. Families with children with special needs, low-income families, immigrant and refugee families, single parents, parents working non-traditional hours and families in rural communities. Many of these families turn to family, friends, and neighbors to help care for their babies and young children because licensed family care or center care is out of reach financially or geographically. However, there are other families that believe family, friends and neighbors can offer important quality care and learning environments that support their cultural, linguistic, or religious values that are not as available in other settings.

The Voices and Choices for Children Coalition is a coalition of Black, Indigenous, and people of color focused on improving outcomes for Black, Brown, and Indigenous children/youth across Minnesota. We are a cross-sector coalition looking at the intersection of structural racism and its impact on health, academic, housing, and economic outcomes for Black, Brown, and Indigenous children. We believe HF 3591 provides access to important health, safety, nutrition, and educational resources to FFN providers, particularly those who identify as BIPOC, and helps ensure infants and young children across Minnesota are getting the best care possible.

Dianne Haulcy

Rinal Ray

Steering Committee Co-Chairs
Voices and Choices for Children Coalition

¹ Use of FFN care as their only or primary childcare arrangement. (Friend, Family and Neighbor (FFN) Care, Wilder Research, 2016).