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Fred Senn
Founding Partner,
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March 28, 2022

Dear Members of the Early Childhood Finance and Policy Committee:

I am writing in support of H.F. 4497, a bill to develop a plan for modernizing the technology systems that support early care and education programs across state agencies.

A 2018 Office of the Legislative Auditor (OLA) report pointed out that there are challenges in the coordination and operation of programs in the early learning space. For example, there are as many as eight funding streams that support access to early care and education across two state agencies and there is limited understanding of how those streams work together, and what the outcomes of those investments are. These challenges are not limited to impacting only the operation of government programs but also present a challenge for parents trying to navigate the system. Unfortunately, to date little real reform has come from the OLA report.

Our organization and others have tried for many years and in many different ways to address the aforementioned issues, most recently by supporting a renewed push for a consolidated, stand-alone Department of Early Care and Learning. In conversations related to reforms or restructuring, technology systems often come to the fore as a barrier that must be overcome if we are to make progress.

While we would much prefer to be moving with urgency toward a new department that would comprehensively address the shortcomings of our current system, we appreciate and support taking the forward step outlined in H.F. 4497. Addressing issues related to technology systems is important and necessary and will benefit both the children served by our programs and the taxpayers who fund them.

We thank the Committee for its consideration and would be pleased to answer any questions you have. I can be reached at maas@closegapsby5.org.

Sincerely,



Ericca Maas
Executive Director
Close Gaps by 5