March 7, 2023

Representative Dave Pinto
Chair, Children & Families Policy & Finance Committee
200 State Office Building
Saint Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Pinto and Members of the Committee:

Minnesota's Prenatal to Three Coalition (PN-3) writes in support of HF 1698, to provide state funding for family, friends, and neighbor (FFN) care. Approximately 40% of infants and toddlers and 25% of children ages 3–5-years old were cared for by FFN providers in Minnesota in 2016. Families with children who have special needs, low-income families, immigrant and refugee families, single-parents, parents working non-traditional hours and families in rural communities often access 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. Additionally, there are other families that believe family, friends and neighbors can offer important quality care and learning environments that support their cultural or religious values that are not as available in other settings.

During the pandemic, Minnesota dedicated $3 million in one-time federal CRSSA funding to support FFN providers access educational resources and provide access to training for providers focused on increasing quality of care to those providing care. These time limited resources provide critical resources to providers who don't always have access to learning and educational materials or know how to access learning on child safety and safe sleep.

We believe all Minnesota families deserve access to quality care and early learning experiences regardless of their caregiver or provider. HF 1698 provides access to important health, safety, nutrition, and educational resources to FFN providers and helps ensure infants and young children across Minnesota are getting the best care possible.

Thank you,

Deb Fitzpatrick,   Nancy Jost,   Laura LaCroix-Dalluhn,
Children's Defense Funds-MN,   West Central Initiative,   MN Prenatal to Three (PN-3) Coalition,
Co-Chair   Co-Chair   Coalition Coordinator