



Written Testimony for HF3826/SF4341

Good Morning,

My name is Nicole Flick and I own ABC123 Child Enrichment Center LLC and I am a leader with Kids Count on Us. I wish I could be there to testify in person, but I am very short staffed and could not make it without closing a classroom.

On behalf of child care center directors across the state, we are begging people to come and work in childcare for little money, no benefits and very long hours most of the weeks with overtime. We have offered incentive after incentive to get educated people to choose our industry but they don't. They choose the public school or private nanny. Why? Higher pay, benefits, tuition reimbursement or forgiveness, and resources for children who need resources for mental, social, or physical development.

When parents bear the burden of paying for the entire cost of care the resources are few and far between in the childcare industry. The pipeline for qualified teachers is extinct. Until this industry is treated like a career and we attract professionals we will always have a childcare crisis and no qualified teachers to employ.

This bill is one small step to invest in our current teachers and give them an education that not only is approved by the State of Minnesota and DHS but also the ability to learn the best practices for working with children in this era of mental illness, and PTSD from COVID, and children with behaviors. It takes years to learn how to best cope with a classroom full of 3-5 year olds who each have their own developmental set back, such as speech, fine motor, large motor or developmental delays. The average length of employment at my center is 4 months. Why? Not enough education or resources on how to handle the severe behaviors of the children in their care.

The child development associate degree educates the teachers how to best cope with these issues, and create positive learning environments for children of all backgrounds and all learning types. The CDA Council who issues the degree, will also provide the courses taken in languages other than English for our New American population to be able to teach in their native language. This benefit alone puts the CDA above the rest.

Representative Keeler has the full support of all the child center directors in the state, backing this bill as we are all struggling to fund the benefit of education for teachers and to get qualified staff. This bill is a step toward paying for the education of our teachers so they can use best practice to educate our littlest minnesotans, and take the burden off of us.

It is with great certainty that I recommend this bill be passed and money appropriated in the hopes of making the childcare industry a career, and furthermore, not making parents pay for this via higher tuition with already outrageous childcare costs.

I appreciate your time. Thank you

Regards,

Nicole Flick

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LEAD & CARE

Association of Family Child Care Professionals



Partnering with Providers, Supporting Family Child Care Businesses

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RE: [HF3826](#) (**Keeler**) Child care services grants funding provided for staff training, and money appropriated.

Mister Chair and Committee Members:

My name is Cyndi Cunningham. I have been a Licensed Family Child Care Provider in St. Paul for 26 years and am the current Public Policy Chairperson for Lead & Care (rebranded Minnesota Child Care Provider Information Network, MCCPIN), a 501c3 sitewide association for Licensed Child Care Providers.

I am testifying on behalf of Lead & Care in **support of HF3826** which provides funding for providers to reach the professional level of a CDA.

Family Child Care programs have a wide variety of educational backgrounds. Many with higher education (i.e. AA, BA, master's etc.), however there are many who do not have those degrees.

There is a strong push for licensed programs to have such degrees/education.

However, working full-time, managing a business, a family and limited funds, a provider without such degrees has a difficult time obtaining this higher ed.

The CDA is a viable, quality, and recognizable credential which can assist providers to reach levels of expertise which will serve them and clients/children well.

With increased expectations of higher education/training in the child care field, limited funds, and time for licensed programs to obtain these standards, the financial support to obtain a CDA is critical.

Thank you to Rep. Keeler and others for bringing this bill forward.

Cyndi Cunningham

Lead & Care Public Policy Chairperson