

TO: ND House Human Services Committee Members

FROM: Earleen Friez - 808 N 3rd St Hettinger, ND 58639 - cell phone 701-567-3102

RE: Written Testimony in Opposition to HB 1347 - relating to registration of in-home providers of early childhood services

I was a licensed child care provider in our Hettinger home for 26 years. After retiring from child care due to health reasons, I served as Office Manager for Hettinger Chamber of Commerce for 16 years. Although now retired, my passion for the child care profession and children in their care continues.

I am opposed to HB 1347 for numerous reasons including:

- Unregulated care is a very important option for parents needing child care especially for single parents, those doing shift work, working evenings or nights, working weekends, working part time, and needing before and after school care and care when school isn't in session. This care is provided by relatives, friends, neighbors, moms of young children who opt to care for a few additional children instead of paying for child care so they can work outside of the home, retired people who love children and wish to supplement their income, students etc.
- I assume that the main purpose of this bill is to be able to prevent some providers who lost their license from continuing to provide care as an unregulated provider of 5 or fewer children as currently provided by ND law. I am concerned also, but reality is that parents have a responsibility in choosing who cares for their children. However sometimes they don't have another option.
- I was actively involved with child care leadership on the state level from 1986 until a couple years ago, including serving on numerous DHS committees. Although there have always been concerns about unregulated child care, North Dakota has always recognized the importance it plays as an option for parents. It is a known fact that in most communities, licensed child care options do not meet the needs for child care.
- I can't imagine how DHS could ever begin to uniformly enforce this registration requirement. It might be easier in smaller communities, but reality is that because of fewer options in rural communities the number of unregulated providers can be higher and absolutely necessary. Please keep in mind that most in-home providers do so for more than 40 hours per week.
- I can't see how this bill could be amended in any way for me to support it. Reality is that teens and college students are an important part of those currently providing unregulated care. Do you really think they would choose to become registered? The same is true of retired people.
- Changing the bill to instead redefine unregulated care in century code from 5 to 3 children and or only children from one family as some other states do, is not an acceptable option either because it would more severely limit parental child care options.
- Reality is that requiring registration for providing unregulated care would absolutely decrease the numbers of those providing such care. Thus unfortunately the only option for some parents for at least part of their working day, especially single parents, would be to leave children too young to adequately and safely care for themselves home alone or possibly with a sibling who might likewise be too young.
- I fear this bill could be a stepping stone for the state eventually requiring everyone providing care of children to be licensed. We need more, not fewer, options for parents seeking care of their children.

Please consider these reasons and vote to "recommend do not pass" for HB 1347. Thank you.