



**BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS  
OF THE RED RIVER VALLEY**

Testimony in Support of 2301

Greetings Chair Wobbema and Honorable Members of the Senate Workforce Development Committee,

My name is Robin Nelson. I share this testimony in support of Senate Bill 2301. Outside of the department funding bill, I consider this to be one of the most vital of currently proposed legislation regarding child care.

I reside in District 41 and serve as the Chief Executive Officer of the Boys & Girls Clubs of the Red River Valley in Fargo. Ours is a non-profit organization that operates 12 licensed child care sites in which we serve approximately 600 school-age youth every day.

I will start by recycling a quote from one of my colleagues, “child care is the business that keeps other businesses in business. “

The first thing needed to provide care for children is people, qualified and caring people. Quite simply, this bill is the only one that is solely directed to stabilize child care providers of all sizes and license types by helping them attract and retain staff while not forcing a larger financial burden onto families.

North Dakota very successfully utilized Federal COVID funds via stabilization grants for a similar model to what is proposed in this bill; however, they are soon to end.

The expiring stabilization grants allowed our Boys & Girls Clubs to increase staff hourly wages by \$3.00; consequently, helping us retain and recruit staff, *while not passing that increased cost along to our families.* The increased wages were the driving factor for us to become almost fully staffed.

The passage of this bill will help us sustain that level of availability and affordability.

One final bit of perspective: the required maximum staff to youth ratio is 1:20 for my organization’s license type. Prior to the stabilization grants being implemented, we were short approximately 20 employees. That translated to 400 youth with potentially 800 working parents whose jobs were affected. Please help us maintain and expand upon the current level of availability and affordability for the families served by child care providers like ours.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of the Red River Valley respectfully encourage the committee to recommend a DO PASS on Senate Bill 2301.

Thank you for your time. I welcome any questions.