

My name is Michelle Roeszler. I live in Fargo and have worked in childcare in North Dakota since 2005 as an in-home program owner (legally unlicensed, family, and group), a non-residential group program owner, a center program teacher, and now as a programming provider offering Story + Play sessions in childcare programs as well as substitute services.

I testify today regarding concerns I have regarding proposed changes on SB 2104. My specific concerns include the proposed change to the maximum age a child counts as a school age child in a licensed program as well as the removal of sending certain notices by certified mail.

The proposed change is the maximum age of a school age child counting in a program's capacity from "until age 12" or "through age 11" to "through age 12" has the potential to hold up enrollment in a program of younger children who legally need supervision. This change will likely impact in-home programs the most with a provider's own children now taking up a spot at age 12 that could be used for a family from the community. As the committee knows, childcare is a workforce issue in the state of North Dakota. Our state has a shortage of spots for children whose parents need to work. By tying up spots with 12 year olds will only create additional shortages.

On the subject of supervision of a 12 year old, the department has published in their home alone brochure (www.nd.gov/dhs/info/pubs/docs/cfs/brochure-home-alone.pdf) they specifically state "Children who are the age of 12 years and older may be permitted to act as baby-sitters. It is recommended that they successfully complete an approved child care training course."

These same children who this bill proposes need to be counted in a childcare license are old enough in the eyes of the department to babysit other children. They can also be used as staff in the home providers own program.

The second proposed change that concerns me is the removal of certified mail being the required method of communication for notice of non compliance in a reinspection and for notice of fiscal sanctions. These are important communications and electronic mail is not always a reliable method of receiving information. Emails can be received in spam folders quite easily which would leave a program not knowing important information.

I respectfully request that these specific concerns be addressed as amendments before the bill is voted upon.

Thank you for your time.