

January 24, 2023

I am in support of bill SB2301. I own three childcare centers. One is a licensed center which is 113 children, an infant center that is licensed for 20 infants under the age of 2 and a center that has a capacity of 60 children. Two of our facilities are in a rural area of Lincoln, ND and we have a hard time recruiting staff and retaining staff.

If you have ever worked in the childcare industry, you would realize that it is a very physically demanding job. The pay is only about \$11.00/hr and most of the staff are at poverty level. I cannot pay them the money and benefits they deserve because our profit is low.

I have been a provider for 22 years and I am at risk of closing all 3 places due to not having staff. That means hundreds of children will not have a place to go. I love my job, but I cannot keep robbing Peter to pay Paul. It is mentally and physically draining to me, and my own family is suffering due to the long hours.

The stabilization grant that we received last year kept our doors open! The money was spent to offer my employees \$18-\$20/hour. I also was able to give monthly \$100 bonuses for those that didn't miss many days. The stabilization grant allowed me to hire 5 additional staff so that we had enough people to help classrooms to take the stress off of our teachers. This staff also allowed other teachers to have breaks, go on vacation, and was allowed to stay home when sick. With our stabilization grant running out I will no longer be able to keep the extra staff nor be able to keep paying our current staff \$18-\$20 per hour.

Our childcare industry is collapsing before your eyes. Please help us to keep our centers open! We need this stabilization grant to keep us afloat.

Thank you

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