

January 25, 2023

RE: SB 2301

To whom it may concern,

My name is Sue Brady, currently I am a licensed group home childcare provider in Bismarck. I have been doing childcare for 37 years. I have a BA in Early Childhood Education. I am also a Step 3 on the QRIS rating scale and am completing Step 4 at this time.

I am writing in favor of SB 2301. The previous stabilization grant allowed me to stay open in the beginning stages of COVID, while the majority of my families stayed home with their children. Follow up grants provided by the state allowed me to update a filtering system in my home, purchase toys and equipment that were easier to clean and sanitize, additional cleaning supplies and many tools and furnishings to help stop the spread of COVID. I was able to retain staff, pay them when I had no families to care for due to COVID. I also used the money to pay for childcare liability insurance, health insurance and rising food costs. Because of the monthly stipend, I was able to keep my monthly fee the same from the fall of 2019 to January 2023. I am thankful to the state for their support of all childcares through the stipends and grants.

I do have concerns with this bill however. Under section 1, calculation of funds. I feel the ages need to be refined and precise. An infant in a family program is aged 0-24 months, a group program it is 0-18 months and according to our mandated SIDS training, an infant is 0-12 months. A toddler can be defined as 18- 36 months in a group childcare setting, but 24-36 months in a family care setting. The way I am reading this bill, a toddler ends at four years.

Under section 2, additional funds provided for the highest level on the QRIS. As a provider that has been working towards the Step 4 rating, I am thankful for the additional incentive. The QRIS program takes many hours of additional training, documentation and coaching. I want to note that just because many providers are not rated on the QRIS scale, we have many, many providers that do an outstanding job and also go above and beyond standard rules and regulations.

Thank you again for the help we are receiving through these much-needed grants.

Sincerely,

Sue Brady