

January 25, 2023

RE: SB 2301

To whom it may concern,

My name is Michelle Klabo, I'm currently a licensed group childcare provider in Jamestown. I have been doing family childcare for almost 10 years. I have a bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education from MSUM. I am a Step 4 provider on the QRIS rating scale with Bright and Early for the last 3 ½ years.

I am writing in favor of SB 2301. The previous stabilization grant allowed me to stay open during the pandemic without increasing my rates. It allowed me to implement health and safety equipment, additional toys, and extra learning materials for the children in my care. I was able to use the money to pay for childcare liability insurance, health insurance and overhead increasing costs. With the stabilization funds I was able to keep my weekly rates the same and not have my parents pay extra.

I appreciate our state's support with the grants that I received over the last couple years. Since March 2020, it has been difficult mentally/physically trying to keep our children safe and healthy during a pandemic. Having the additional funds has made it easier to work in this field and not have to worry about the financial end. I love my job. Working in early childhood is an amazing career, but it is one of the most difficult and challenging jobs. Our career choice was overlooked for years, but we are essential to keep the workforce continuing in North Dakota. With costs increasing it would help keep our costs down and not have to make families pay additional tuition if the stabilization monthly grant continued.

I also wanted to comment on section 2, with the additional funds provided for the highest level on the QRIS. As a provider with a Step 4 rating, I am thankful for the additional incentive. The QRIS program takes additional hours with training and documentation. There may not be a lot of childcare providers at a 4 rating, but we worked hard to achieve this and I am happy to see we would be compensated for it, the higher the step there is a lot more work to complete.

Sincerely,

Michelle Klabo, Owner

ABC Learn N Play