



Letter of Support – HB 1012

Tuesday, January 28, 2025

Chairman Nelson and members of the House Appropriations - Human Resources Division Committee,

For the record, my name is Cale Dunwoody, and I have the distinct pleasure of serving as the Vice President of Public Policy for the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce (FMWF Chamber). On behalf of our over 1,700 members, I respectfully offer testimony in support of House Bill 1012.

At the FMWF Chamber, our mission is to protect and promote business, inspire individuals, cultivate communities, and influence action. We commend the 68th Legislative Assembly for their critical investments to address the need for accessible, affordable, and quality childcare throughout our state. Childcare is central to the state's workforce challenges, and in order to adequately address workforce shortages, the state must also address childcare.

North Dakota continues to grapple with the shortage of childcare slots, particularly for infants and toddlers, due to the high costs associated with providing these essential services. Between 2017-2024 the cost of childcare in North Dakota increased 40% at traditional day care centers, and as much as 50% at home day care centers. A survey conducted by the Greater Fargo Moorhead Economic Development Corporation and the Southeastern Education Cooperative reported 71% of respondents identified high costs as a barrier to accessing childcare. This illustrates the impact rising prices has on the availability and stability of our state's workforce.

Awareness of available programs is also a barrier for families to access the care they require. Data from the same study indicated only 41% of respondents were aware CCAP and the working parent relief program were available to them. Lack of awareness is not isolated to our region as the Greater North Dakota Chamber reported only 33% of respondents statewide knew about these programs. Lack of adequate information on these programs inhibits economic growth as it limits the number of individuals participating in the labor force.

Addressing North Dakota's childcare shortage is a vital part of solving the workforce issue. Passage of this bill offers additional support to employers and working families, showing the state's commitment to investing in our future. We respectfully urge this committee and the 69th Legislative Assembly to continue to strategically invest into critical economic assistance opportunities and early childhood programs that reduce cost and increase access to quality childcare throughout North Dakota by giving this bill a DO PASS.

Thank you for your attention to this matter and your commitment to North Dakota.



THE CHAMBER
FARGO MOORHEAD WEST FARGO

Sincerely,

Cale Dunwoody
Vice President of Public Policy
Fargo Moorhead West Fargo Chamber of Commerce