



FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT®
FOR HEALTHY LIVING
FOR SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

February 4, 2025

Re: HB 1524

Chairman Headland and Members of the House Finance & Taxation Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB 1524.

The YMCA is North Dakota's largest child care provider, serving over 3,200 children in Bismarck, Grand Forks, and Fargo. Child care is not just a family issue—it is a workforce issue. With 78% of families with children under 18 having both parents in the workforce, reliable and affordable child care is critical to economic stability.

The state has made key investments in child care, including Regional Workforce Impact Program grants (RWIP) which have helped expand services in child care deserts and infrastructure funding through DHHS that has benefited many providers, the Ys included. But providers are still struggling—especially in infant and toddler care, where high staffing ratios drive up costs that family tuition alone can't cover. Facilities also face workforce shortages, limited capacity, and rising operational expenses.

HB 1524 offers additional opportunities to support child care. By empowering regional councils to allocate funding based on local needs, this bill considers child care in the list of important issues to consider in a biennial work plan. Child care providers might see targeted support necessary to:

- Recruit and retain staff through wage support and training incentives.
- Build, expand and improve facilities to meet growing demand.
- Offset provider costs, keeping child care more affordable for families.

This bottom-up approach ensures funding is used efficiently and effectively, tailored to each region's unique challenges.

Child care is essential infrastructure for a strong workforce. HB 1524 is a smart investment in families, businesses, and North Dakota's economy. We urge your support.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Alliance of North Dakota YMCAs

Bill Bauman
Missouri Valley Family YMCA
Bismarck

Nick Grey
Minot Family YMCA / Triangle Y Camp
Minot

Bob McWilliams
Altru Family YMCA
Grand Forks

Steve Smith
YMCA of the Northern Sky
Fargo