



## Letter of Support HB 1012

Thursday, March 27, 2025

Chairman Dever and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee – Human Resources Division,

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, specifically related to childcare.

At the FMWF Chamber, our mission is to protect and promote business, inspire individuals, cultivate communities, and influence action. Our state's working families are struggling to access childcare due to high costs and shortages of providers. In North Dakota, 78% of families have two parents in the workforce – meaning access to childcare is critical to support our state's economy and those working families. We commend the 68<sup>th</sup> 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 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. In a survey conducted by the South East Education Cooperative, which surveyed chambers of commerce and economic development organizations about local child care, it reported that 71% of respondents identified costs as a barrier to childcare. This illustrates the impact rising prices have on the availability and stability of our state's workforce.

Addressing North Dakota's childcare shortage is a vital part of solving the workforce issue. Passage of this bill, with enhanced financial support, offers additional assistance to working families and providers – demonstrating the states commitment to addressing this issue. We respectfully urge this committee and the 69th Legislative Assembly to continue strategic investment to reduce costs and increase access to quality childcare throughout North Dakota.

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

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cale Dunwoody".

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