

Testimony in Support of SB2306

Honorable Chair Wobbema and Members of the Senate Workforce Committee,

I submit this testimony in strong support of SB2306, which seeks to establish a child care workforce recruitment and retention program to address North Dakota's growing workforce needs.

My name is Robin Nelson, and I reside in District 41 in Fargo. I have the privilege of serving as CEO of the Boys & Girls Club of Fargo, the largest childcare provider for school-age youth in the city. Additionally, I am a fifth term elected member of the Fargo Board of Education, where I serve as the legislative spokesperson. My dedication to supporting children, families, and communities is both professional and deeply personal.

Child Care Is a Workforce Issue

Childcare is not just a family issue—it is a workforce issue. Parents cannot fully participate in the workforce if they do not have access to affordable, high-quality childcare. Without an adequate workforce to staff childcare centers, families are left without reliable options, and businesses suffer from reduced employee availability.

At the Boys & Girls Club in Fargo, we currently serve **992 registered youth**, yet **273 remain on a waitlist**—primarily **due to staffing shortages**. The primary barrier to expanding childcare services is the inability to recruit and retain qualified staff.

Retaining Support for School-Age Programming

It is vital that funding incentives for **school-age child care** remain in this bill. Working parents with school-age children **need before- and after-school care** to maintain their employment. Without competitive wages and incentives, we will continue to lose staff to higher-paying jobs in other industries, further limiting childcare access.

Governor Armstrong's Insightful Comments

I appreciate Governor Armstrong's acknowledgment that workforce initiatives will be ineffective unless we have workers to support them. Childcare staff shortages impact every industry by making it more difficult for parents to remain in the workforce.

Conclusion

I **respectfully urge** this committee to **prioritize SB2306** to ensure childcare providers can **offer competitive wages**, recruit and retain skilled professionals, and support North Dakota's **working families and economy**.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,
Robin Nelson
CEO, Boys & Girls Club of Fargo
Legislative Spokesperson, Fargo Board of Education