



THE CHAMBER
FARGO MOORHEAD WEST FARGO

FMWF Chamber Letter of Support for HB 1540

April 24th, 2023

Chairman Bekkedahl and members of the Senate Appropriations Committee,

For the record, my name is Shannon Full, and I have the pleasure of serving as the President and CEO of the Fargo Moorhead West Fargo (FMWF) Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber's mission is to be a catalyst for economic growth and prosperity for businesses, members, and the greater community. On behalf of our over 1,900 members, I respectfully offer testimony in support of House Bill 1540.

As members of this committee well know, workforce is a major challenge facing nearly every business across North Dakota. This challenge is not unique to our state, businesses across the United States are in desperate need of qualified workers to fill their open positions. A critical component of this nationwide workforce crisis is the accessibility of affordable and quality childcare. These challenges are cyclical in nature and require a multi-pronged approach to strategically address the root causes of the problem.

Through innovative approaches, the state of North Dakota, the business community, and childcare providers can work together to create a more sustainable and equitable childcare sector. In order to provide quality, accessible, and affordable childcare solutions for North Dakotans, we believe legislation should:

- Integrate initiatives and policies that streamline the processes required for employment at a childhood or school-aged care facility.
- Review and adjust regulations and codes associated with establishing and operating a childhood or school-aged care facility to address burdensome regulatory barriers without diminishing quality and safety.
- Advance public-private partnership models for childhood and school-aged care providers to provide communities with affordable and accessible care.
- Address financial barriers hindering North Dakotan's access to childcare services.
- Identify creative opportunities to provide childcare for North Dakota families working non-traditional hours.
- Create a sustainable childhood and school-aged care sector through adequate grants, incentives, training, and shared service resources.

In closing, I would like to express my deepest appreciation for Representative O'Brien and the number of other legislators, statewide officials, and state employees that worked extensively, bringing together state leaders, childcare providers, business leaders, and community stakeholders, to create this robust legislative proposal. House Bill 1540 addresses many of our state's challenges surrounding childcare by merging several of the childcare proposals offered throughout this session. We encourage the entire Legislative Assembly to support the innovative childcare solutions outlined in this bill, to provide meaningful relief to many North Dakotans.

On behalf of our members, thank you for your time and consideration of this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Shannon Full
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