

Testimony
Senate Workforce Development Committee
HB 1119
Senator Kathy Hogan
March 6, 2025

Chairman Wobbema and members of the Workforce Development Committee, for the record my name is Kathy Hogan. I represent District 21, which is central Fargo and a portion of West Fargo.

As you are aware, your Committee revised SB 2389 into a study bill which respectfully died on the Senate floor, because HB 1119 was also a childcare shall consider study. Over the last week, several legislators became concerned that the legislative interim process has reviewed childcare issues for many sessions. Last session when we passed a comprehensive child care package in HB 1540, we thought we had major strides in expanding accessibility and affordability to help families and employers. However, we continue to hear concerns about childcare from providers, families, employers and business.

This proposed amendment would modify this bill from a traditional legislative shall consider study into the Program Evaluation initiative through the Legislative Council. As most of you are aware, most state legislators have some type of program evaluation functions. North Dakota, however, has not had the resources to do this model of evaluation. During the last interim, the Legislative Management Committee and Legislative Arrangements and Procedures, agreed that this type of in-depth external evaluation is needed to assure that the policy and fund bills we adopt are implemented as passed. Three new FTE's have been funded to begin this process.

After considering the various studies we have done, several of us felt that childcare is an area that is very important and despite the legislative efforts, issues continue to arise. In collaboration with legislative leadership, we recommend this idea to evaluate childcare structures/services and make this one of our focus areas for the next interim.

You are seeing the first version on this concept. I am requesting that your Committee take this assignment very seriously and consider possible additional amendments such as Senator Beard's. We may want to add a small legislative advisory committee to work with the Legislative Council Program Evaluator.

Thank you for your consideration. I am more than willing to answer any questions.