



**Human Services Committee
March 12, 2015
Senate Bill 1044 – Support**

Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie, and members of the Human Services Committee:

As a small businesswoman and child care provider I can attest to the fact our economy is broken and SB 1044 is a step in the right direction to help working families. I have been a child care provider for 20 years. My job is not only to provide a loving, home environment where children experience a quality early education that prepares them for school. It is my business that allows working mothers and fathers to go to work. If childcare workers like me did not do our jobs, most likely you could not do yours.

Parents should make enough so they don't have to go the State for help, but the fact of the matter is too many parents do not make anything close to a living wage. I have seen far too many parents better themselves at work, earn just a little bit more and then they lose their childcare assistance all together. Even with State assistance, parents still cannot afford childcare. The rates the State pays are not enough to for childcare workers ourselves to not live in poverty. When I break down how much I make per hour it is between four and five dollars an hour.

Because I care for children, I am forced to choose between asking parents making poverty wages to pay me more, or accept making far less than minimum wage and making due myself. It does not need to be this way and the legislature has the power to help working parents, care providers and the children who are truly our future.

It's not that there are too many childcare workers or too few children. The children are out there, but the state is not funding enough slots to care for poor children. It's morally wrong that as a country we are not making sure these children are in quality affordable childcare.

Billion dollar corporations have set up a system that keeps hard working parents in poverty and these businesses expect the rest of us to keep dealing with the crisis they have created. If parents were paid a living wage, they wouldn't need State assistance. SB 1044 creates an incentive for the employers who pay poverty wages to raise the standards for their employees, or pay for the State services they force their workers to access to simply survive. The funds raised by the bill will then go to expand access to quality care and raise the wages of the child care workers, improving the lives of providers and ultimately keeping good educators in the field. The companies who are forcing working families to struggle need to pay their fair share.

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