



February 14, 2022

Senator John Stinner, Chair
Members of the Appropriations Committee
Nebraska Legislature

RE: LB1025

Chairman Stinner and Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Elizabeth Everett, and I am the Deputy Director of First Five Nebraska. First Five Nebraska is a statewide public policy organization focused on supporting policies that provide quality early learning environments for our youngest Nebraskans. I am here today to testify in support of LB1025 and the child care components of the North Omaha Recovery Plan.

The North Omaha Recovery Plan includes efforts to help families and child care providers in the community. Among other items, the plan proposes stipends for individuals in job training programs to defray the cost of things such as child care and it creates a forgivable loan program to help sustain and stimulate growth of new and existing child care businesses. First Five Nebraska supports these programs and believes they will have a significant positive impact for the North Omaha community.

The child care industry is the backbone to our state's economy. Our working parents cannot fulfill their roles without access to quality child care options. Yet, over the past year we have seen a 7% decrease in child care programs and a 7.4% decrease in child care employees. The reduction in staff and reduction in child care programs has a substantial impact on the capacity of Nebraska's child care system. At the same time, quality child care is expensive. The average yearly cost of child care in Nebraska is roughly \$12,000. For most working families, this is an unaffordable expense.

The North Omaha Recovery Plan will help working families and child care providers. First Five Nebraska looks forward to working with Senator Wayne and Senator McKinney and would like to thank them for their efforts on this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Elizabeth Everett". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Elizabeth Everett
Deputy Director
First Five Nebraska