



January 24, 2022

Senator Lynn Walz, Chair
Members of the Education Committee
Nebraska Legislature

RE: LB868

Chairperson Walz and Members of the Education Committee,

My name is Dr. Katie Bass and I am the Data and Policy Research Advisor at First Five Nebraska. First Five Nebraska is a statewide public policy organization focused on supporting policies that provide quality early care and learning experiences for young children in Nebraska. I am here today to testify in support of LB868 and I want to thank Senator Morfeld for introducing this legislation.

Since 2017, Nebraska child care employees and providers have been eligible for the School Readiness Tax Credit program. This program provides a nonrefundable tax credit for eligible child care providers and a refundable tax credit for eligible child care employees. This program expires this year, and as part of our efforts to reauthorize the legislation, we conducted a series of focus groups to learn how to improve and increase access to the tax credits. The biggest problem we found was that a majority of child care employees were not eligible for the refundable tax credit because they did not meet the minimum education requirements. Statute currently states that they must have a Child Development Associate (CDA) certificate or a one-year certificate or diploma in early childhood education or child development. LB868 broadens the language to include a CDA or an equivalent in educational attainment, so more child care employees can be eligible for the program.

Although this is a small change, we know it will significantly benefit Nebraska's child care industry. Thank you again for allowing me to testify in support of this legislation. I am happy to try to answer any questions at this time.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Katie Bass".

Dr. Katie Bass
Data and Policy Research Advisor
First Five Nebraska