



February 10, 2025

Senator Kathleen Kauth, Chair
Members of the Business and Labor Committee
Nebraska Legislature

RE: LB363

Chair Kauth and Members of the Business and Labor Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit online comment for the public record as a proponent of LB363.

A highly skilled early childhood workforce is essential in helping our state's families cultivate the next generation of healthy, capable Nebraskans. Creating effective education and training pathways for early care and education professionals also produces downstream benefits to the wider workforce and economy. LB363 will help underemployed and aspiring early childhood professionals advance in their careers through paid apprenticeships.

A key benefit of apprenticeship programs is that they enable a full-time transition to a new career with a minimum amount of debt. This is especially important for recruiting early childhood professionals, whose median hourly wage of \$13.99 is substantially lower than the state median wage of \$22.33 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2024).

Additionally, LB363 provides assistance with child care expenses for apprentices in building and construction trades. Child care plays an essential role in helping these individuals advance in their careers- contributing to increased economic activity for the state.

LB363 would be a helpful recruitment and retention tool to support Nebraska's workforce, specifically the early childhood workforce. Ultimately, development of the early childhood workforce through apprenticeships would give families the high-quality options they need and deserve in the care of their young children. Thank you for the opportunity to provide public comment. I encourage the Committee to advance LB363 to General File.

Sincerely,

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

Mitchell Clark
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