



March 10, 2025

Senator Brian Hardin, Chair
Members of the Health and Human Services Committee
Nebraska Unicameral Legislature

RE: LB442

Chair Hardin and Members of the Health and Human Services Committee,

I am writing in support of LB442 on behalf of First Five Nebraska. Thank you for your consideration of this bill to establish a state child care subsidy program.

You have already heard a considerable amount of testimony this session on the topic of child care. As you know, the data is very clear about child care needs in our state, with 75% of children under age 6 in Nebraska having all available parents in the workforce. (Source: [U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 5 Year ACS Data, Table B23008](#).) Additionally, among all 50 states, Nebraska is ranked #1 in the country with the highest rate of children under age 6 living with a mother in the labor force. (Source: [U.S. Census Bureau, 2023 5 Year ACS Data, Table B23008](#).)

The elements contained in this proposal would significantly address some of the most complex layers of the child care issues we face in the state: employer needs, family accessibility, and financial viability. We have seen the success of other states utilizing similar approaches. For example, under a similar model, Vermont stabilized their child care workforce, built the necessary child care infrastructure to support the state's economy, and gave more choices to parents – all while working hand-in-hand with local businesses and chambers of commerce to ensure the model and the outcomes met the needs of employers.

Senator Spivey has taken lessons learned from other states, applied innovative thinking, and sought a revenue source that would not impact the General Fund. We greatly appreciate her leadership on this issue and look forward to working with this Committee, with Senator Spivey, and with the business community to improve child care for Nebraska families, early childhood providers, employers, and local communities across the state.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jennifer M. Goettemoeller Wendl". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jennifer M. Goettemoeller Wendl, MSW
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