

Hello, my name is Julie Seydel and I am testifying on the behalf of MACCP (Minnesota Association of Child Care Professionals) and as a child care provider. I have been a licensed family child care provider for 13 years in Anoka County.

Thank you for taking time this evening on such an important topic.

In the past 5 years it has become increasingly difficult to operate a family child care program in the state Minnesota. This year is the first in 13 years I was overly concerned about my relicensing visit due to the changing regulatory and oversight environment at both the local and state level.

With each passing year family child care providers feel less and less included in state level decision making process of proposed rule or statute changes. Stake holder meetings are almost exclusively held during the day which makes it inaccessible to family child care providers. When providers are busy caring for children. While providers and our organization have sought out meetings with DHS we have been unable to get concrete information about legislation prior to it being introduced. Thus leaving us in the position to scramble to prevent at times devastating proposals when if we would have been brought into the planning process many of these last minute regulatory challenges we've faced over the last few years could have been avoided. While DHS has been responsive to emails there have been many times they have not been forthcoming with information. There has been an overwhelming sense that providers have to be on the defense

We have been made aware of a new inspection process in development by DHS which includes a check list which contains hundreds of questions that licensors will be expected to use during inspections. To date after multiple requests to DHS they still has not provided us a draft of the check list. We child care providers want to be compliant, we lose sleep over inspections and fear of non-compliance. However how are we to be compliant if DHS will not give us a list of what it being ask at inspection? How are we to be in compliance if the rules and regulations are written so broadly that there is continual reinterpretation changing the expectations at both the state and county level. This is a profession we chose because we are passionate about children, development and early childhood education yet it has gotten to the point that one missed step, one unpreventable accident could result in a child care providers losing her business, the ability to provide for her family and could possibly result in criminal and civil charges. There's no doubt that this increasing difficult environment has been one of the biggest contributing factors to the decline of child care providers and has also contributed to the increase cost of child care.

Until we find some common sense solutions to the oversight and regulatory process we will continue to lose providers and costs will go up.

Child care providers need clear expectations which can only be obtained by combining rules and statutes in one place so they are not open for continuing reinterpretation. Child care providers need someone to turn to whether it be a board of child care or an oversight agency outside of DHS when we are faced with challenges with the department.

Such as inaccurate regulation interpretation, and challenges to improperly issued violations. Right now it seems the only agency overseeing this division of DHS is DHS. Child care providers need to be part of the regulatory process prior to legislation being introduced. We cannot be expected to respond to last

minute pieces of legislation that could potentially put child care providers out of business or put children in harms was. Such as the bill introduced last year giving parent's unlimited access to our programs regardless of criminal history, without regard to the safety of children in care. Child care providers also need to know about rules and regulations before they are enacted. On a number of occasions we have received word that new enacted rules or laws we were initially told would not impact us now apply to us. Denying childcare providers their right to provide input and testify for or against that legislation.

We understand that many of the rules and regulations were passed with intent of keeping children safe and we share that commitment. We urge you to work with child care providers to find the solutions needed to keep children safe while supporting the family child care profession.