

September 10, 2020

Chairwomen Crawford and Members of the Family, Children and Seniors Committee,

Thank you so much for the opportunity to provide written testimony on house bills 5975, 5976, 5977. I am the owner of Bunny Patch Day Care in Hudsonville Michigan and I operate a licensed in home group childcare (12 children). I am in support of these bills as they stand but it would be much better for us providers if we could have a bit of modification if you can.

HB 5975 (O'Malley) Upping the ratio of caregiver to children needs to occur but I would propose that it be an increase of 2 children per single childcare and 4 for group childcare license. Ratios have not been changed for 47 yrs and the size of homes and the increase of more modern technology/appliances have freed up more time for the average caregiver. I share a large 3 bedroom ranch with a fully finished basement with just my husband and I have more square footage than I will ever be able to use. I have 2 very large licensed playgrounds and am limited to 12 kids but have the allocated amount of licensed space to care for 20 children and the staff that is wanting to stay employed. I have 6 staff and they all want more hours but I'm unable to give them more hours. The cost of food and insurance, work comp, and liability has made caring for children a money-losing job. We need an increase of 2 to at least 4 children just to keep our economic outlook above the poverty line. I encourage you to up our ratios significantly as we probably won't have them upped again in another 50 years.

HB5976- To better assist the working parent, it would definitely be helpful to them if the licensed daycare could be able to take a few more children before and after school.

HB 5977- That a childcare facility or in home childcare facility is in anyway hooked up with Great Starts to Quality is not the issue that should even be a stipulation. Although I am a 4 star Great Starts to Quality provider I do not appreciate the way they interfere and push us around. GSTQ has been pushing the family daycares around for many years and adding more "fat" to everything they can. I ONLY reason i am affiliated with GSTQ is because I receive more money from the state for my Subsidized parents who receive help from DHS for childcare assistance, so therefore my parents do not struggle as much. I believe to link \$\$ to having to deal with GSTQ is wrong and needs to be reversed and that allowing a care giver to care more children because they are GSTQ rated is ridiculous. GSTQ is putting themselves where they aught NOT to be.

Thanks, for hearing me out. If any questions please feel free to call or email. My phone is 616-292-4443

Sincerely,
Ruth TerAvest