

Submitter: Jameelah Rasheed
On Behalf Of:
Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood
Measure: HB4005

Testimony in support of HB 4005
February 2nd, 2022

Dear Chair Power, Vice Chairs Reynolds and Zika, and Members of the Committee,

My name is Jameelah Rasheed and I am writing in support of HB 4005. I am very passionate about this bill because I was a state child care provider for six years. I understand the issues that child care providers are dealing with, as well as the struggles of parents and families.

I started out caring for the Muslim children in my community. I would clean the Masjid and bring my niece and nephew with me. Other parents were so impressed with how well behaved they were that they wanted me to care for and teach their children as well. I decided I would become a certified in-home provider through the state and help care for the children in my community.

The state would reimburse me for my submitted hours, but never on time. Once I did not receive reimbursement for 5 whole months. I knew that many of the families I cared for were struggling. Because of this, I was often flexible with parents with their co-pay, sometimes not even charging at all. It's really hard on parents when they are working, but aren't making enough to provide for their families. Child care is an extra expense that adds up over time. How could I possibly tell a parent that I would not care for their child because they could not afford to pay that week? I always had faith that by giving back to the community in this way, everything would work out exactly as it should, no matter what happened with my financial compensation. To this day, I still have friends who thank me for providing child care for their children and being flexible with them.

Today I watch my family members struggle with these same issues with their children. My sister's child care provider recently stopped providing child care during the pandemic, which forced my sister to quit her job to care for her 13-month-old daughter. She has been struggling to find a child care provider because there are not many available slots, and because care is so expensive. She needs to work to support her family, but can't do so until she finds a provider that accommodates her needs. This is a heartbreaking struggle that no one should have to experience.

No parent should have to choose between working and caring for their children. No child care provider should be underpaid and waiting for reimbursement from the state

for months on end. HB 4005 will address these issues and create a child care system that supports families and child care providers across the state. Please invest in child care and support HB 4005.

Sincerely,
Jameelah Rasheed