

Submitter: Herlin Alvarez

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

Measure: HB2991

Dear Chair Lisa Reynolds and Vice-Chairs Hoa Nguyen & Anna Scharf,

My name is Herlin Alvarez. I run a certified child care in Marion County. Thank you for the opportunity to share my support for House Bills 2504, 2991 and 3029.

Right now is when I need this help the most.

I have been working in the area of early childhood education for almost 7 years. Throughout that time I have faced many structural barriers that have made it difficult to keep going. When I did child care in a less professional way (un certified) it was a little easier because I worked alone – but I could only serve a few children. I changed my license to a certified license, and decided to move to a bigger place so I could serve more families. But this is becoming more difficult for us than I expected. One of the main reasons is that I haven't been able to find staff.

We have a huge shortage of child care providers. I think it is due to many things. For example, lack of good financial compensation, a lot of pressure but lack of support from the agencies that regulate homes and centers, lack of adequate staff, lack of financial and educational support for those who want to start, and the list goes on. My child care serves Spanish-speaking families, but there are even fewer Spanish-speaking people for me to hire. This has truly become a crisis, especially for families that need care that is in their home language and that is culturally appropriate for their children.

House Bills 2504, 2991 and 3029 will all help us build the child care workforce that we need. They will make it easier for people who want to work in child care to actually get certified and get to work. HB 2504 and 2991 will help more people who speak languages other than English get into the child care workforce. HB 3029 will provide urgently needed financial and housing support to help recruit and retain child care workers. These bills will reduce the red tape that keeps so many people from getting certified and they will help us build a more culturally diverse child care workforce.

We have a responsibility to take care that future citizens are in a safe place and that we meet all their needs. But right now it is a very difficult business to work in. I have spoken with other providers who prefer to work alone so as not to have so many expenses and challenges, but that way they cannot provide services to very many children.

My dream is to open several places in the future, for all the need that there is.

House Bills 2504, 2991 and 3029 would help reduce the workforce barriers we face and help us serve more families. I hope you will support all three of these bills.

Thank you.

Herlin Alvarez
PRO Marion County Training Facilitator
Early Start Daycare and Preschool Certified Teacher