

Submitter: Anna Pickel

On Behalf Of:

Committee: House Committee On Early Childhood and Human Services

Measure, Appointment or Topic: HB3201

I have been providing healthy meals for childcare children for the past 13 years. I have witnessed families who are food insecure express gratitude for knowing their child can eat healthy, homecooked meals at no additional cost to them while in care. They can drop off a hungry child in the morning and know that they won't be hungry when they pick them up. As a business owner, I take on the cost of doing this and depend on reimbursement from the USDA program, however these reimbursements do not cover the full cost of preparing these meals. Especially with rising costs, feeding a group of children scrambled eggs for breakfast is approaching \$20, plus the cost of fruit and milk to make that a complete meal. A family childcare would at maximum receive \$26.56 reimbursement for that meal, barely breaking even, but a tier 2 program would receive less than \$10 for the same meal. Research has shown the extreme importance of feeding children a healthy breakfast so they are capable of learning and growing while at school. Reducing barriers so childcare programs can serve these essential meals without having to potentially increase costs to parents is of vital importance. Please support HB 3201 and ensure all children have access to healthy, essential meals while at school, because education doesn't start at kindergarten.

-Anna Pickel

Owner/Director, Happy Go Lucky Childcare