

Chair White, Vice Chair Salvo, Ranking Member Lett, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to HB 647.

My name is Kristi Thompson and I am a working parent and FCC provider. 90% of my families rely on Publicly Funded Child Care (PFCC) to remain employed and provide for their family. PFCC was a lifeline for me 20 years ago and still is today for many families. It is not something anyone wants to depend on forever — it is a bridge that allows parents to work toward self-sufficiency and stability for children.

I am very concerned about provisions in HB 647 that would eliminate the ability for parents to use more than one approved childcare provider.

Many who rely on PFCC do not work traditional 9-to-5 jobs. Parents work second shift, third shift, weekends, and rotating schedules. Primary providers cannot always accommodate sudden overtime or after-school gaps. That is why having an approved secondary provider is essential. This is not about convenience — it is about being able to maintain employment.

Many families also rely on one provider for primary care and another for after-school care, especially when their children attend school-based programs. If this flexibility is removed, families may be forced to withdraw their children from after-school programs or reduce hours at work. That hurts both parents and children.

The purpose of PFCC is to help parents become self-sufficient. It is designed to support work — not make it harder. If you reduce flexibility and limit provider options, you are making it more difficult for parents to maintain stable employment. When parents lose flexibility, they risk losing jobs. When they lose jobs, they remain on assistance longer. That is the opposite of the program's intent.

I also have significant concerns about increased fraud referral mechanisms that could automatically refer providers to the Attorney General. While accountability is important, many providers and parents are simply trying to follow the rules and care for children safely. We need safeguards that do not create fear or instability in a system that working families and depend on every day. If funding is cut or a provider is shut down due to suspected fraud, where are these children supposed to go for care? We are in a childcare desert; there are not enough providers in our area as it is. These provisions will be devastating to our community.

Childcare is already one of the biggest challenges working parents face. For those working nontraditional hours, flexibility is not a luxury — it is survival. Please do not remove the very tools that allows families to work, provide for children, and move toward independence.

I respectfully ask you to reconsider the provisions in HB 647 that limit families to a single provider and not allowing providers due processes that may create unnecessary disruption in the PFCC system.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Kristi Thompson

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