

Comment Report

HF 532

A bill for an act establishing a qualified instruction funding supplement for the school budget year beginning July 1, 2020, making appropriations, and including effective date provisions. (Formerly HF 439, HSB 184.)

Subcommittee Members: Sinclair-CH, Goodwin, Quirmbach

Date: 03/16/2021

Time: 12:30 PM

Location: 217 Conference Room

Name: Kelly Donnelly

Comment: As an preschool director, early educator of over 25 years and volunteer with Save the Children Action Network, I am really disappointed with the over \$7 million cut from the states preschool program. This will impact over 2,600 Statewide Voluntary Preschool Program participants who depend on the state program to attend preschools like mine and get to school ready to succeed. Since hearing about these deep cuts to prek, Ive been in contact with many of my elected representatives, some sitting in this subcommittee, to share that with over \$7 million in cuts, our center will see a 75% funding shortage! Many of our lawmakers have shared with me that a solution is coming, but without a certainty passed through our legislative body and/or signed by Governor Reynolds that plugs this funding gap, my budget is written in crayon, and Ive heard from fellow centers across Iowa that they may have to tell parents their slots are no longer available. My request is that any additional K12 spending bills include a dedicated vehicle to fully fund preschool. COVID19 closures caused several programs like mine to strike a nearly impossible balance between continuing to provide critical early learning and child care to families, and keeping our staff and community safe from a deadly pandemic. If we are to build back to enrolment levels seen prepandemic and, as Reynolds Economic Recovery Advisory Board recommends expand statefunded preschool, we must guarantee funds to preschool. Programs like mine depend on it.