



February 25, 2025

HB1121- Child Care Scholarship Program- Youth Transitioning from Foster Placement to Successful Adulthood Pilot Program-Establishment House Ways and Means Committee

POSITION: SUPPORT

Dear Chair, Vice Chair, and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of CONCERN Professional Services, I want to express my full support for House Bill 1121. CONCERN has provided Treatment Foster Care placements for young moms and their babies for over 15 years. It is hard for young moms to accept assistance for their children because they are clear that their babies are not a ward of the state or in the system. Foster parents and CONCERN caseworkers and staff provide a mentoring partnership with these young mothers to help them successfully achieve their personal goals while acquiring the parenting skills to be good mothers.

For young moms to acquire a daycare voucher they must be employed or attending school. This is difficult because they must have a voucher for a daycare provider before enrolling their child in day care. The young mother is often not able to start the process and is forced to leave their child with the foster parent, if the foster parent is available, or with a friend. The young mom is often overwhelmed by the voucher application as well.

The voucher requires the young mother to identify the baby's father, they often do not want to do so because the father might be assisting in different ways, or the mother does not know the identity of the father, or the circumstance of the pregnancy could be traumatic. Other aspects of the application are sometimes difficult to maneuver as well, getting a foster parent to sign off on the application. Many foster parents are not willing to sign because the form requires the foster parent to share their social security number as well as financial information. The application also requires the mother to have specific school hours or work hours.

Needless to say, this process is very daunting for a young mother. Our job is to provide a young mother with the tools to succeed. This pilot program would level the playing field to better prepare a young person to achieve their goals as they launch from the foster care system.

Thank you for your time and your support of HB 1121.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Carrie Knebel", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Carrie Knebel LCSW-C, ATR-BC  
Region Director