

# PINE PALS CHILD CARE CENTERS



April 8, 2025

Dear Committee Members,

I urge the committee to vote against the amendment mandating video security cameras in all licensed child care centers that care for infants and toddlers.

My primary concern for my programs is the significant financial burden this would impose on us. I am the Director of two licensed child care centers in Bemidji, Minnesota, that together are licensed for 130 children, with 70 of those children in the infant and toddler age category. The costs to purchase and maintain equipment, retain records, and the staff time required for this proposed mandate would be impossible. Parents are already struggling to afford child care, and we would have no choice but to increase tuition, placing further burden on working parents. Staff priority is the health and safety of children, which means direct supervision and building healthy relationships - not spending time on video records that could also violate privacy and security concerns.

What we need is better financial support to hire, train, and retain high-quality caregivers that would allow for smaller group sizes of children and higher ratios of caregivers to children. We do not need another financial and time-consuming mandate that takes our resources away from providing the best care to children.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Lydia Pietruszewski'.

Lydia Pietruszewski  
Director

1700 30<sup>th</sup> ST NW / Bemidji, MN 56601 / Phone: 218-444-5151 / Fax: 218-444-5633

E-mail: [office@pinepals.org](mailto:office@pinepals.org) Website: [www.pinepals.org](http://www.pinepals.org)

# PINE PALS CHILD CARE CENTERS



April 8, 2025

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to urge you to vote against the proposed amendment that would mandate video security cameras in all licensed child care centers that serve infants and toddlers.

As the Business Manager of two licensed child care centers in Bemidji, Minnesota, together licensed for 130 children, with 70 in the infant and toddler age category, I am deeply concerned about the financial implications of this mandate. The costs associated with purchasing and maintaining the equipment, managing the records, and allocating staff time would be unsustainable, very likely forcing our programs to close. The cost alone for cameras and installation in licensed spaces in our buildings would be nearly \$50,000.

With parents already struggling to afford child care, we would be forced to increase tuition, adding to their financial strain. Our staff prioritizes the health and safety of the children through direct supervision and nurturing relationships, an approach that could be undermined by the time-consuming task of managing video records, which also raises privacy and security concerns.

Instead of imposing mandates that divert resources, we need increased financial support to hire, train, and retain high-quality caregivers, which would allow for smaller group sizes and improved caregiver-to-child ratios. What we need are solutions that allow us to dedicate our time and energy to providing the best possible care for children.

Thank you for considering my concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Olive Smith'.

Olive Smith  
Business Manager

1700 30<sup>th</sup> ST NW / Bemidji, MN 56601 / Phone: 218-444-5151 / Fax: 218-444-5633

E-mail: [office@pinpals.org](mailto:office@pinpals.org) Website: [www.pinepals.org](http://www.pinepals.org)

# PINE PALS CHILD CARE CENTERS



April 8, 2025

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed amendment that would mandate video security cameras in all licensed child care centers that serve infants and toddlers.

My primary concern is the significant financial strain this mandate would place on child care providers. As the owner of two licensed child care centers in Bemidji, Minnesota, we are licensed for 130 children, including 70 infants and toddlers. Implementing this amendment would cost my programs nearly \$50,000 just for equipment. The additional costs associated with maintaining the equipment, storing records, and dedicating staff time to this mandate would be unsustainable.

Parents are already struggling with the cost of child care, yet we would be forced to increase tuition, putting additional pressure on working families. This increase could lead to decreased enrollment and most likely force our centers to close. Our priority is the health and safety of the children in our care through direct supervision and fostering healthy relationships, not managing video records that could also raise privacy and security issues.

Instead of imposing unfunded mandates, we need increased financial support to recruit, train, and retain qualified caregivers, allowing for smaller group sizes and improved caregiver-to-child ratios. This approach would be far more effective in enhancing the quality of care we provide.

Thank you for considering my concerns.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dustin Holloway'.

Dustin Holloway  
Owner

1700 30<sup>th</sup> ST NW / Bemidji, MN 56601 / Phone: 218-444-5151 / Fax: 218-444-5633

E-mail: [office@pinepals.org](mailto:office@pinepals.org) Website: [www.pinepals.org](http://www.pinepals.org)

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to the proposed legislation that would require video surveillance in toddler classrooms. While I understand the intention behind this proposal, I believe the unintended consequences would significantly and negatively impact early childhood programs like ours.

At Heartwood, a small, community-rooted Montessori program, we are deeply concerned about the following issues:

**1. Cost and Financial Burden**

Requiring video surveillance both indoors *and outdoors* drastically increases the cost and complexity of compliance. Installing weatherproof cameras, ensuring full coverage of play yards, and maintaining a secure data storage system that retains footage for 60 days could cost **\$10,000–\$15,000 or more upfront**, with ongoing monthly expenses for cloud storage, cybersecurity, and technical support. For small, nonprofit, or independent programs, these costs are simply unsustainable.

**2. Risk of Program Closures**

Faced with such a costly and burdensome mandate, I fear that some programs — including ours — would be forced to consider closing their infant and toddler classrooms entirely. The consequence would be devastating: fewer high-quality care options for families at a time when the need is already greater than the available supply.

**3. Staff Time and Administrative Overload**

Complying with requests to access, review, and pull footage would place an enormous burden on our small administrative team. Staff time is already stretched thin meeting licensing requirements, communicating with families, and supporting the developmental needs of children. Adding video review to our responsibilities is not feasible without additional personnel, which most programs cannot afford.

**4. Privacy, Trust, and Ethical Concerns**

Recording young children and their caregivers throughout the day — both inside and outside — raises serious concerns about privacy, especially when footage must be stored and potentially shared. It also undermines the culture of trust that is essential in early childhood settings. Educators may feel surveilled rather than supported, which could lead to increased stress, higher turnover, and difficulty recruiting qualified teachers.

**5. Negative Impact on Children’s Experience**

The presence of cameras may alter how caregivers and children interact, creating a less natural and more performative environment. We are deeply concerned that this kind of surveillance will harm the very relationships that form the foundation of healthy early development.

We strongly urge you to reconsider this legislation. Rather than supporting quality care, mandatory surveillance would likely drive out small, high-quality programs — leaving families with fewer, not better, options.

Thank you for considering the voices of those working closely with young children every day.

Sincerely,  
Sinéad

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Sinéad Carolan

Head of School Heartwood Montessori School – NE (612) 220-7504

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**From:** Shonali Harrison <sharrison@epmontessori.net>

**Date:** April 8, 2025 at 11:08:01 AM CDT

**To:** colie.colburn@house.mn.gov

**Subject: Video Camera Concern**

Dear Committee Members,

We at Eden Prairie Montessori are very concerned about the Video Camera mandate in our classrooms. The reasons mainly being :

- \* Cost of purchasing and maintaining such equipment.
- \*Retaining footage and concerns of cyber security and the cost.
- \*Privacy concerns for children, and families.
- \*Monitoring and having reliable additional staff.
- \*Additional burdens on administration to comply with related policies.
- \*Additional cost for parents since we will have to pass on the cost as we have no margins for extra expenditure.

We have an 'open door' policy and many observation windows for parents, supervisors or anyone wanting to observe classroom activity at any given time.

Please consider all the expenses we have to cover. It is getting harder to survive in this economy.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Shonali Harrison

Owner

Eden Prairie Montessori Learning Center

Sent from my iPad

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Dear Committee Members,

I do not approve the new proposal for allowing the video footage equipment requirement to become a law. Our main concerns are the cost for equipment, the cost for staffing to monitor the footage, the privacy concerns that parents have for their child being on public access and the limited time in having this rule go through by Jan 1st.

I believe that parents can easily misinterpret things on a low quality footage camera and it will cause more issues with daycare centers that already have limited staffing. Childcare centers are in desperate need for teachers and there is a staffing shortage across the state and nationwide. This law would further limit the number of teachers in the field as they would feel they have an invasion of privacy and would leave the industry.

Parents also would not want to have their child be on camera where another adult could see their child on a camera if that parent was watching a screen and the person behind them happened to look. No CCTV camera is 100% private proof.

The cost to install these cameras would be an enormous burden for centers. All centers would have to increase their tuition rates in order to accommodate the added fees, thus more families would be in a financial crisis for paying more for childcare. This is a domino effect even though the intentions are good, however it is not a solution for one size fits all. As a business owner of a center, it has been a struggle to maintain operations in the middle of COVID and keep good staff on board. This law would not be good for taxpayers!

I would think that centers with many violations should be required to get cameras as a corrective action, however not all centers need it.

Please reconsider and I appreciate your time.

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**Hetal Agrawal**

On-Site Owner

EMAIL: EdinaMN@GoddardSchools.com

DIRECT: 612-438-2288

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**Joint Religious Legislative Coalition**

P.O. Box 4233  
Saint Paul, MN 55104

April 8th, 2025

Dear Chair Kotyza-Witthuhn, Chair West, and Members of the Children and Families Finance and Policy Committee,

On behalf of the Joint Religious Legislative Coalition (JRLC), I am writing to express our support for the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) co-payment fee schedule changes included in HF2436.

JRLC is a state-wide coalition formed through the partnership of our four sponsoring faith organizations: the Islamic Center of Minnesota, the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas, the Minnesota Catholic Conference, and the Minnesota Council of Churches. As people of faith, we advocate alongside our neighbors of differing religious backgrounds to address poverty, uphold the dignity of overlooked communities, and mitigate societal harm. For years our organization has advocated on improving and expanding the Child Care Assistance Program, an essential support to families in need across Minnesota.

We would like to thank you for including language in HF2436 that would decrease the co-payment amount for families that participate in this program, including capping the maximum family co-payment amount at 6.9% of a household's adjusted gross income. This measure will make CCAP an even more effective support for working families and improve financial stability for many who receive this assistance.

Again, thank you for your support of CCAP and understanding the importance of this program for working families in Minnesota.

Sincerely,

Leah Patton

Executive Director, Joint Religious Legislative Coalition



Co-Chairs Kotyza-Witthuhn and West  
House Children and Families Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to present on HF 1926, Representative Mahamoud's bill to provide one-time funding to the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches (GMCC). This investment would strengthen the Minnesota Food Share March Campaign and support the critical work of 285 food shelves across the state.

GMCC has been supporting Minnesota's low-income individuals and families for more than 120 years. In that time, we've provided direct support while continually listening, adapting, and building programs that meet people where they are. Whether it's through food access, youth leadership development, or community-based service opportunities, we've earned the trust of the communities we serve. Our longevity isn't just a matter of time, it reflects deep-rooted relationships, cultural understanding, and a commitment to the dignity and well-being of every person we serve.

For the past 44 years, the Minnesota Food Share March Campaign has been a vital tool in the fight against hunger—helping food shelves meet rising needs during one of the most demanding and under-resourced times of the year. But this campaign is about more than just raising food and dollars. It's about partnership, community engagement, and ensuring that no Minnesotan is left behind.

Every Friday, we also offer a range of services in collaboration with trusted partners, and in the last 18 months alone, we've served over 1,600 unique individuals. More than half of our guests are regulars. But they don't come just for a hot meal, a shower, clean clothes, or access to services. They come for connection. What GMCC has built is a community grounded in care, patience, and non-judgment. We've created a safe, supportive space where our unhoused neighbors are met with humanity and healing.

This session, GMCC came to the legislature with three bills. While we understand the difficult economic situation the state is in, we ask the committee to consider including these important bills in your final budget.

- HF 1926 would help bolster the MN Food Share March Campaign.
- HF 1164 would fund GMCC's Friday drop-in services.
- And HF 1927 would allow us to assess our building and determine whether our current space can continue to serve as the home for nearly a dozen programs used by hundreds of people every week.

Together, these bills offer a chance to strengthen a trusted community resource that works to improve the lives of those in our immediate community and throughout the state of Minnesota.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service.

Adrienne Dorn  
President & Executive Director



Tuesday, April 8, 2025

Co-Chairs Rep. Carlie Kotyza-Witthuhn and Rep. Nolan West  
House Children and Families Committee

Dear Co-Chairs Kotyza-Witthuhn and West and Committee Members,

We're writing to thank you for the opportunity to present on HF 776, Rep. Hanson's bill to provide additional funding for the Family Assets for Independence in Minnesota (FAIM) program earlier this session.

We also want to thank you for including an additional appropriation of \$429,000 in FY26-27 to ensure that more Minnesotans can have opportunities to achieve greater economic independence and greater economic security.

FAIM participants live in Greater Minnesota and in the Twin Cities. They use the financial coaching & savings match they receive through the program as a hand up, not a hand out to purchase a home, pursue post-secondary education, or acquire a new vehicle. FAIM participants all receive 12 hours of financial education, increasing the financial fitness of Minnesotans working to leave poverty permanently. And in many cases, these new skills are shared with the next generation, decreasing the likelihood of intergenerational poverty.

Investing in FAIM is investing in economic stability for low-income working Minnesotans. By including this funding in your bill you are showing those who are working to get out of poverty that their goals are not just realistic but they are achievable.

We encourage you to keep this funding in your bill as it makes its way through the House, and to oppose efforts to remove this essential funding in conference committee.

Thank you for all you do for your communities and for the people of Minnesota.

Sincerely,



[Dave Snyder](#) | Statewide FAIM Director

**a:** 411 Industrial Park Blvd. | Elbow Lake, MN 56531

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**e:** [davids@wcmca.org](mailto:davids@wcmca.org) | **w:** <https://minnesotafaim.org/>

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|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Nelima Sitati Munene<br>Executive Director<br>African Career Education and<br>Resource, Inc (ACER)             |
| Nina M Coleman<br>Training & Financial Wellness Program<br>Manager                                             |
| Missy Becker-Cook<br>CEO<br>West Central MN Communities Action<br>(WCMCA, Inc.)                                |
| Ted Hoffman<br>Director of Participant Services<br>Community Action Duluth                                     |
| Pam Johnson,<br>Director of Policy & Advocacy<br>MN Community Action Partnership                               |
| Lori Schultz<br>Executive Director<br>MN Community Action Partnership                                          |
| Paige Carlson<br>Aging Well and Asset Development<br>Director<br>West Central MN Communities Action<br>(WCMCA) |
| Patricia Harris<br>Strategy & Development<br>Phyllis Wheatley Community Center                                 |
| Teresa Carter<br>Executive Director<br>Tri-County Community Action<br>Partnership (TCC)                        |
| Debi Brandt<br>Executive Director<br>United Community Action Partnership<br>(UCAP)                             |
| Amanda Mackie<br>Executive Director<br>Minnesota Valley Action Council<br>(MVAC)                               |

|                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Denise Stewart<br>Executive Director<br>Lakes and Pines Community Action<br>Council                |
| Dawn Wambeke,<br>Executive Director<br>Neighbor's, Inc.                                            |
| Kendra Krolik<br>Chief Strategy and Advancement<br>Officer, CAP-HC                                 |
| Liz Kuoppala<br>Executive Director,<br>MAHUBE-OTWA Community Action<br>Partnership                 |
| Colleen Orne<br>Executive Director, Tri County Action<br>Program (Tri-CAP)                         |
| Lori Schwartz<br>Executive Director<br>Lakes & Prairies Community Action<br>Partnership (CAPLP)    |
| Jeremy Emmi<br>Director of Asset Building and Energy<br>Programs<br>Three Rivers Community Action  |
| Katy Nelson, Sr. Director of<br>Development & Communications,<br>Phyllis Wheatley Community Center |