

Dear Mr. Chairman and members of the Public Health Care & Human Services committee,

My name is Nicole Riehl and I am the President and CEO of Executives Partnering to Invest in Children, also known as EPIC. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 20-126 to allow home child care in Homeowners Association Communities.

Our bipartisan membership of business leaders represent companies and various industries across Colorado and work through EPIC as early childhood business champions to find innovative, fiscally sound solutions that work for children, families, employers and our state as a whole.

We are focused on advocating for policies that improve the availability and affordability of early childhood care and education. We have seen a steep decline in access to child care which is affecting our workforce and economic recovery, particularly for families with infants and toddlers. Our workforce needs improved access to affordable child care, and family child care homes are a choice many families desire for their children due to caregiver continuity, proximity to their own neighborhoods, and the flexibility to serve families with evening or weekend work schedules. As our state recovers from the COVID crisis, family child care homes are also more flexible and can serve children in smaller group sizes that are more suited to preventing the spread of illness.

As a former board president of a homeowners association, I can speak from my firsthand experience and knowledge in this area. Many HOA's were founded using a common set of templated bylaws that failed to contemplate the nuance and needs around in-home child care. Once an association has been formed, it can be an extremely difficult, if not impossible, task to revise these bylaws as you typically need a large portion of residents to take time from their busy lives to submit proxies or vote in person to accomplish this task.

I urge you to support this bill and help us address the critical needs for improved access to child care in HOA communities in the most efficient and appropriate way. Thank you for your time today!