



May 27, 2020

Colorado General Assembly
200 E. Colfax Avenue
Denver, CO 80203
Attn: House Public Health Care & Human Services Committee

Re: SB20-126

Dear Members of the House Public Health Care & Human Services Committee:

My name is Michael Cooke, and I am the State Director of Council for a Strong America (CSA) Colorado.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this written testimony in support of SB 20-126. Included with my testimony is a letter from retired admirals and generals of Mission: Readiness, one of five membership organizations under the CSA umbrella.

Our Mission: Readiness members know that investments in the earliest years are proven to be the most important, and can get kids off to the right start and on a path to academic success, which will be imperative should they want a career in military service.

On May 13, we released the Colorado specific report "Want to Grow Colorado's Economy? Fix the Child Care Crisis." This research report provides evidence that the lack of child care in Colorado, specifically for infants and toddlers, results in an annual impact of \$2.2 billion to our state's economy.

As the report demonstrates, our pre-COVID child care system did not meet the needs of enough Colorado children, families, or our economy. As we now know, many child care providers have closed their doors in the wake of this pandemic and many of those will not be able to reopen. This is especially true for providers in rural and remote areas of our state.

We also know that availability of care for infants and toddlers has dramatically declined over the last ten years, largely due to a decline in family child care homes. One of the barriers that is affecting the supply of licensed family child care homes is a prohibition to home-based child care found in many HOA governing documents, which are simply outdated and very costly to amend.

I have served on the board of two metro-area HOAs and currently live in a community governed by a Declaration that prohibits child care. That document was written more than 50 years ago, and due to the cost and lengthy legal process to amend a Community Declaration, it is unlikely to be revised.

By fixing this problem, you will allow more families to open their homes to a small number of children, which is especially important at a time when we need child care options more than ever. This action would be a great step forward toward addressing the child care crisis in Colorado.

Thank you for your consideration of these thoughts and those included in the letter from Mission: Readiness. We urge your support for SB 20-126.

Sincerely,



M. Michael Cooke
State Director