

Madam/Mr Chair, Representative XXXXXXXX

My name is Heather McMahon. I own and operate a small family childcare home in Eagle, CO. I employ a local mother of two, and throughout the week we provide care for 9 families. I wish I could be physically present to deliver this testimony, but the children in my home need my support.

The Youth Enrichment School (YES) is a cozy, intimate environment, where we provide highly personalized service to our students and their parents. Our 6:1 student to teacher ratio allows us to meet each child at his or her unique point in their educational journey, and cater to their individual needs. We work with kids who are unable to thrive in large, busy centers, and have even helped students overcome physical and cognitive disabilities before making the big move to kindergarten. I can tell you from first hand experience that large childcare centers do not allow for this degree of personalized support. We believe that our little school is an asset to our community, especially when high quality early childhood education is so hard to find.

The YES school is located in the house that my husband and I have been renting for the past six years. About three years ago we began shopping for a new home that would accommodate the school, and allow us to build equity. We've toured dozens of properties, trying to find one that meets the needs of both our family and the business. As you can imagine, this is no small task. The housing market in our community is extremely challenging, there is little to no inventory and nearly every single family home is under HOA rule. In fact, we've missed multiple opportunities to buy because of HOA restrictions.

In August 2019, we finally found the perfect place, but when the seller caught wind that we would require HOA approval to operate our childcare - per state licensing regulations - our contract was terminated and the house went to the next buyer in line. Then, another incredible home came to market late last year. It checked all of the boxes. We knew that the HOA would not permit our childcare, so we wrestled with the decision to try and fly under the radar or to simply close our doors. While spending days researching our options and pondering this terrible dilemma, another buyer swooped in and purchased the property. That one still stings to this day.

At this point in time, my husband is prepared to close the school, and I'm not far behind. It is absolutely devastating to think that my future, and the future of our students, is being jeopardized by HOA rules and state regulations, but that is exactly what is happening.

Colorado's working families need loving caregivers to watch over their children. SB 126 will allow our childcare system to blossom and help educators keep their passions alive. I ask that you please support this bill, and support our Colorado kids.

Thank you, Heather McMahon