



January 31, 2024

To: Senate Committee on Universities and Revenue

From: Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce

Re: Senate Bill 623

The Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce has served our community since 1915 as the advocate of business. We have 1,100 investor organizations who employ more than 45,000 individuals throughout the Eau Claire area. We work to represent the business community as a champion of a strong local and regional economy.

The Eau Claire Chamber supports SB 623 and AB 660, creating a new tax credit program for employers to facilitate childcare for their employees. The following excerpt is from the Chamber's 2023 Business Issues Agenda as it relates to childcare:

The availability and affordability of childcare has become an increasingly acute issue for employers, families, and childcare providers. This has inhibited the ability of families to take full advantage of employment opportunities and for employers to have full access to the potential talent pool. The Chamber supports meaningful public policy solutions to address specific workforce challenges, including:

- Childcare availability and affordability for working parents: There is an urgent need for innovation on the part of the state to address the funding, business model, and regulatory oversight of early childhood care and education in ways that will effectively deal with availability, affordability, and accountability for quality and safety. This by necessity must address the business model for childcare providers, especially in their ability to attract and retain motivated, high quality staff.

The program created by SB 623 and AB 660 provides the kind of innovation and support that we envision is needed to address the childcare issue. Employers have a strong interest in providing more options for their employees, and this bill provides a pathway to be able to support programs in their communities that will address current needs. It also provides flexibility in creating local solutions, whether supporting existing options or creating new employer-sponsored programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Scott Rogers".

Scott Rogers
Vice President Governmental Affairs
Eau Claire Area Chamber of Commerce

Reply to: rogers@eauclairechamber.org 715-858-0616