Klobuchar
FOR GOVERNOR

Make Child Care More Affordable and Available

Minnesota families deserve child care that is safe, affordable, and high-quality. Amy Klobuchar has long fought for child care and early education, which are essential for Minnesota families and for Minnesota's economy. Child care is where student achievement begins. Kids who arrive at kindergarten ready to learn do better in school and in the workforce, and high-quality early learning delivers one of the strongest returns of any public investment. At the same time, parents cannot go to work and jobs go unfilled if there is no one to watch their kids. Families deserve more quality child care, and Klobuchar will deliver on that by increasing supply, lowering costs, and ensuring transparency and accountability.

In the Senate, Klobuchar has led bipartisan legislation to reduce child care shortages by expanding training for the child care workforce and has obtained funding for multiple projects to build and expand child care facilities throughout the state. She cosponsored federal legislation to expand early learning by making it more affordable for children from birth to age five. And she has supported bipartisan legislation that was signed into law to reauthorize and improve Head Start. Klobuchar helped secure Minnesota's Race to the Top – Early Learning Challenge grant, making Minnesota one of nine states to receive funding for children in need. And when the Trump administration froze funding for Head Start and child care programs across the country, threatening care for over 10,000 Minnesota children, Klobuchar and her colleagues successfully fought to restore access to those resources.

As Governor, Amy Klobuchar will make child care more affordable and more available across Minnesota. She will expand access to child care options – including in rural Minnesota, where there is much need – by training more child care workers, building more child care facilities, and cutting red tape and lowering overhead for small providers. She will support innovative models such as expanding existing day cares, building new ones, centers in existing schools and buildings previously used for schools, on-site work day cares, and child care "pods" – all while streamlining the support available for working families. Klobuchar will have zero tolerance for child care fraud and will root it out and stop it before it starts.

1. Expand Affordable Child Care Options and the Child Care Workforce

- **Support innovative child care models.** Build on the great examples that already exist, including building new child care facilities, as Brooklyn Park has; expanding existing child care providers; co-locating child care with senior living centers, as Burnsville and Warroad are doing; using underused buildings for child care, as Windom is doing with a former school; and supporting family child care networks and child care "pods" like those launched in Stevens County. These models are acutely needed in Greater Minnesota, and already exist from Luverne to the Iron Range and from Austin to Warroad. Read more about Amy Klobuchar's plan to expand Minnesota's rural economy at AmyKlobuchar.com/rural.
- **Expand child care centers to increase supply, including by using underused buildings.** Provide financing and assistance so providers can open or expand, including in former schools, unoccupied buildings, and other underused spaces. All over the state, cities and towns are turning empty and donated buildings into child care facilities, and the state should support those efforts.
- **Expand the child care workforce.** Recruit and train child care professionals, expand alternative pathways to child care jobs, and waive initial licensing and application fees to reduce the financial burden on new workers. Give child care workers and providers better tools to connect, so qualified Minnesotans can find work in the communities that need them. Provide consistent funding that creates stability for providers, and streamline and consolidate the dozens of separate workforce grants that currently exist across agencies. Read more about Amy Klobuchar's plan to prepare Minnesota's workforce for the future at AmyKlobuchar.com/workforce.
- **Partner with employers to expand child care.** Work with businesses, hospitals, nursing homes, and schools to open or expand child care centers that serve employees and surrounding residents. Work to expand grants for employers who help pay their workers' child care costs, prioritizing small businesses and communities with severe shortages.
- **Reduce overhead for small providers.** Launch a child care operations hub that allows small and home-based providers to share a network for payroll, billing, and insurance, cutting red tape and costs while supporting child care workers. Streamline licensing and permitting and regularly review child care rules to make sure they are accomplishing their purpose without adding unnecessary costs or paperwork. Ensure requirements are reasonable, and work with local governments to standardize permitting for small and home-based providers while keeping safety standards high and taking action to end fraud.

2. Make Child Care More Affordable for Families

- **Streamline child care aid into one easy-to-use program.** Increase access to affordable child care by combining Minnesota's two child care assistance programs – the Child Care Assistance Program (CCAP) and child care scholarships – into a single scholarship-style program with one application review, thorough vetting, and one website where parents can find open slots and apply.
- **Deliver child care scholarships for more children.** Minnesota lets parents choose child care through scholarships, which has encouraged providers to open and expand, including in child care deserts – but many more families who qualify could still benefit from the scholarship. Expand the scholarships so more families receive them, making child care more affordable for them. Work with the private, nonprofit, and public sectors to build a lasting funding partnership for child care.
- **Advocate for federal funding for Minnesota.** Continue fighting back against the Trump administration's nationwide funding cuts to child care and Head Start, so Minnesota families and providers who qualify for support do not have it ripped out from under them.

3. Increase Transparency, Eliminate Fraud, and Make Sure Every Dollar Goes to Families Who Need It

- **Zero tolerance for child care fraud – root it out and stop fraud before it starts.** Transform state government across child care programs so every dollar goes to actual child care, not to services not delivered: root out fraud with a top-to-bottom audit of state agencies and by replacing decades-old computer systems; vet grants and contracts before state funds are awarded; stop fraud before it starts with in-person inspections and unannounced visits; create a "Do Not Pay" database to automatically block anyone convicted of fraud against state programs from receiving any grants and contracts; and establish a permanent ban for anyone convicted of fraud against state grants or contracts. Strengthen criminal penalties and extend the statute of limitations for fraud in all state programs, not just Medicaid. Read Amy Klobuchar's full plan to make the government accountable and root out fraud at AmyKlobuchar.com/accountable.
- **Increase transparency with clear goals for school readiness.** Hold child care programs to a high standard – because that's what Minnesota's families deserve. Put down markers for what children should know and be able to do when they start school, measure progress every year, and report the results.

References

Elements of this plan are contained in legislation introduced by Minnesota legislators of both parties, including:

- **Expand Affordable Child Care Options and the Child Care Workforce:** *Sen. Aric Putnam (DFL–St. Cloud), Sen. Melissa Wiklund (DFL–Bloomington), Rep. Nathan Coulter (DFL–Bloomington), Rep. Andrew Myers (R–Tonka Bay), Rep. Danny Nadeau (R–Rogers), Rep. Bjorn Olson (R–Fairmont), Rep. Mike Wiener (R–Long Prairie), Rep. Natalie Zeleznikar (R–Fredenberg Township).*

- **Make Child Care More Affordable for Families:** *Sen. Jim Abeler (R–Anoka), Sen. Liz Boldon (DFL–Rochester), Sen. Bobby Joe Champion (DFL–Minneapolis), Sen. Grant Hauschild (DFL–Hermantown), Sen. Amanda Hemmingsen-Jaeger (DFL–Woodbury), Sen. Robert Kupec (DFL–Moorhead), Sen. Erin Maye Quade (DFL–Apple Valley), Rep. Nathan Coulter (DFL–Bloomington), Rep. David Gottfried (DFL–Shoreview), Rep. Pete Johnson (DFL–Duluth), Rep. Carlie Kotyza-Witthuhn (DFL–Eden Prairie), Rep. Larry Kraft (DFL–St. Louis Park), Rep. Huldah Momanyi-Hiltsley (DFL–Brooklyn Park), Rep. Matt Norris (DFL–Blaine), Rep. Maria Isa Pérez-Vega (DFL–St. Paul), Rep. Dave Pinto (DFL–St. Paul), Rep. Samantha Sencer-Mura (DFL–Minneapolis), Rep. Brad Tabke (DFL–Shakopee), Rep. Bianca Virnig (DFL–Eagan), Rep. Nolan West (R–Blaine).*

- **Increase Transparency, Have Zero Tolerance for Fraud, Make Sure Every Dollar Goes to Families Who Need It:** *Sen. Rich Draheim (R–Fairmont), Sen. Heather Gustafson (DFL–Vadnais Heights), Sen. Michael Kreun (R–Blaine), Sen. Ron Latz (DFL–St. Louis Park), Sen. Aric Putnam (DFL–St. Cloud), Rep. Patti Anderson (R–Dellwood), Rep. Mary Frances Clardy (DFL–Inver Grove Heights), Rep. Steve Elkins (DFL–Bloomington), Rep. Emma Greenman (DFL–Minneapolis), Rep. David Gottfried (DFL–Shoreview), Rep. Pete Johnson (DFL–Duluth), Rep. Ginny Klevorn (DFL–Plymouth), Rep. Matt Norris (DFL–Blaine), Rep. Dave Pinto (DFL–St. Paul), Rep. Bianca Virnig (DFL–Eagan), Rep. Nolan West (R–Blaine), and Rep. Natalie Zeleznikar (R–Fredenberg Township).*

References (continued)

Other elements of this plan are informed by Senator Klobuchar's legislative record on child care affordability, access, workforce, and early learning. On child care supply and workforce, she introduced the bipartisan *Child Care Workforce and Facilities Act* to provide grants to states to train and retain child care workers and build, renovate, and expand child care facilities, particularly in rural communities and other areas facing shortages. She also introduced the *Child Care Innovation Advancement Act* to remove barriers to innovative models and cosponsored the *Right Start Child Care and Education Act* to strengthen the child care workforce by creating incentives for people to earn child care–related degrees and work in child care facilities. On affordability, she cosponsored the *Child Care for Working Families Act*, which would cap child care costs for low- and middle-income families at seven percent of income while expanding access to preschool and child care and improving training and compensation for child care workers. She has also cosponsored the bipartisan *Child Care Availability and Affordability Act* to expand tax incentives for employer-provided child care and dependent care assistance, as well as the *Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit Enhancement Act* to expand the tax credit available to families for child and dependent care expenses. On supporting small providers, she introduced the bipartisan *COACH Act* to give small child care businesses resources on operations, finances, and compliance through the Small Business Administration. On early learning, she supported the *Strong Start for America's Children Act* to expand early learning opportunities for children from birth to age five and the bipartisan *Head Start for School Readiness Act*, which became law in 2007 to strengthen Head Start and help prepare children to enter school.

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