

From: [Ann Mongoven](#)
To: [#CI-StPaul_Ward3](#); [*CI-StPaul_Contact-Council](#)
Date: Tuesday, July 18, 2023 9:53:58 PM

Hello Councilmember Tolbert,

My name is Ann Mongoven and I live in Ward 3. I'm emailing about the early learning resolution that is being presented on Wed July 19 to address childcare affordability. I understand that we have many needs for childcare in St Paul that are not being met. High quality early childhood care and education is unavailable for too many children and unaffordable for too many parents. And all too often, when a childcare option does exist it is only able to sustain itself on low wages and scarce benefits for teachers and caregivers. This is not a responsible way for us to care for the children, workers and businesses of St. Paul.

But while I share many of the concerns of those who worked on the early learning resolution, I have concerns about it:

First, it is based on money coming from the state but we don't yet know how much money is coming from the state. Putting something on the ballot in November when the numbers are so unclear seems irresponsible and creates a mess for a new council to have to untangle.

Second, we haven't yet had large community engagement with all the stakeholders to ensure we are moving in a direction to support our already existing small local businesses and while meeting the needs of our local families. It seems like this program might just benefit the corporate providers and the mom and dad providers, especially those who are BIPOC could lose out. Assurances to equity and culturally responsive access seems missing. We need to pay attention to workforce issues in addition to affordability since they are connected. Isaiah and SPFE both have significant constituencies who care deeply about this issue, are engaged in the work now and both are opposing this particular initiative.

Third, adding another initiative to the ballot creates the likelihood of confusing voters and makes educating voters more difficult. In a time when we want to increase participation in our local democracy, this additional initiative has the potential to do just the opposite by overloading the ballot to the point of discouraging people to make the effort to vote.

I ask for a no vote on this resolution. As much as I'm supportive of the intentions, I believe that we need to have a thoughtful approach to addressing our childcare issues and there are too many questions than there is clarity that Saint Paul voters deserve.

Sincerely,
Ann Mongoven
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