

**From:** [Debra Avenido](#)  
**To:** [#CI-StPaul\\_Council](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Please vote no to resolution 23-1094  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 19, 2023 11:18:21 AM

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**Think Before You Click:** This email originated **outside** our organization.

St Paul City Councilpersons ,

My name is Deb Avenido and I am a resident of Ward 5 on Nebraska Ave W and I am writing to ask you to vote No today on resolution 23-1094 calling for a special election to seek tax levy funding for an early education plan in St Paul.

I am a very strong advocate for full funding to make childcare available to all families with birth to 5 age children. I was very pleased when I first heard about the SPARK initiative in St Paul. But after I spoke to some doing childcare work and learned more about it, I realized that its scope is very limited and I believe that more thoughtful planning needs to be done before asking St Paul taxpayers to support this initiative.

I am a grandparent of a toddler and an infant and help to provide childcare to my grandchildren to ease the financial burden to my son and daughter in law in order for them to be able to work. I am also a retired Ramsey County public health nurse who worked for many years with lower resourced families of newborns. I saw first hand how childcare was not affordable for so many of our families! I also know how critical the first three years of a child's life are for brain development and learning and emotional development, and how quality child care is critical from birth to five in order for our little ones to thrive and have a healthy future. I applaud the work that's been done in St Paul to lift up this critical need.

The last few months I worked to advocate for more state funding for childcare and I am encouraged to see the increase in funding that was authorized during our last legislative session. I appreciate the work that has been done in St Paul, too. Unfortunately I can't support the resolution being presented today. Some of my reasons are as follows. The scope of it is too limited. Funding is critically needed for birth to 3 yrs and I understand that SPARK only addresses 3 & 4 year olds. Also, it does not address the critical shortage of child care workers which is due in great part to the low wages paid. Teachers need a livable wage. We need to take the time to learn exactly how much money will be coming to St Paul in 2024 as a result of the state budget passed and how it can best be used before asking taxpayers to provide more funding for just 3 & 4 yr olds. I'm concerned that both ISALAH and SPFE are not publicly supporting this resolution, especially since both organizations work directly with people who offer childcare and would be impacted by this resolution. I also have questions about how this program will benefit the corporate providers as opposed to family daycare providers, especially those who are BIPOC. What is being done to ensure equity as well as workforce issues.

I encourage you to vote no to the resolution today. As much as I am supportive of the initiative, I believe we need to have a thoughtful approach to addressing this incredibly important need.

Sincerely,  
Deb Avenido