

**ONE HUNDRED NINTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION - 2026**  
**COMMITTEE STATEMENT**  
**LB959**

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**Hearing Date:** Wednesday January 28, 2026  
**Committee On:** Health and Human Services  
**Introducer:** Riepe  
**One Liner:** Require the Department of Health and Human Services to create a youth afterschool credential and an adult eligibility passport under the Child Care Licensing Act

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**Roll Call Vote - Final Committee Action:**  
Advanced to General File with amendment(s)

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**Vote Results:**

**Aye:** 7 Senators Hardin, Ballard, Fredrickson, Hansen, Meyer, G., Quick,  
Riepe

**Nay:**

**Absent:**

**Present Not Voting:**

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**Testimony:**

**Proponents:**

Senator Merv Riepe  
Danielle Moss  
Stephanie Vadnais  
Andres Lopez  
Charles Carder

**Representing:**

Opening Presenter  
self  
Beyond School Bells  
Completely Kids  
self

**Opponents:**

**Representing:**

**Neutral:**

**Representing:**

\* ADA Accommodation Written Testimony

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**Summary of purpose and/or changes:**

LB 959 amends the Child Care Licensing Act by adding new language to establish a credentialing system for youth and adult child care workers to standardize background checks and training and allow portability of qualifications across programs. New section 2 of LB 959 provides that the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) will create a youth afterschool credential for 16 and 17-year-olds working in school-age or temporary child care programs. The credential requires background checks, registry checks, and a seven-hour orientation. The credential allows limited provisional work while checks are pending, valid for one year, and may be accepted by licensed programs as proof of meeting training and safety requirements. New section 3 of LB 959 provides that the DHHS will create an adult eligibility passport for anyone 18 or older, verifying that they've completed all required background checks and training for child care or youth programs. The passport is valid for one year, renewable annually, and shall be accepted by licensed programs as proof of meeting state requirements. This section allows credentials to move



between programs, and the passport can be updated if new background information arises. DHHS may have a fee to cover administrative costs.

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**Explanation of amendments:**

AM 2839 is a white copy committee amendment that strikes the original sections and replaces the bill. AM 2839 amends the Child Care Licensing Act by adding a new section which directs DHHS to establish a youth afterschool eligibility letter for 16 and 17-year-olds seeking employment in school-age child care programs or temporary nonresidential child care programs. A temporary nonresidential child care program is defined as one providing care for no more than twelve consecutive hours, not on a continuous or regularly scheduled basis, and in a location not ordinarily used as a licensed child care center.

To obtain the letter, an applicant must complete all required registry checks, including the child abuse and neglect and sex offender registries, and submit required background check documentation and complete a minimum seven-hour new staff orientation approved by DHHS. Applicants are required to reimburse the state for application costs. Applicants who have submitted all background check materials may engage in provisional employment while checks are pending, provided they are not left alone with children, are not counted in staff-to-child ratios, and work only in qualifying program types.

The eligibility letter is valid for 180 days from issuance for purposes of obtaining initial employment. If the holder begins employment within that window and maintains continuous employment, the letter remains valid for one year from issuance. Letters not used within 180 days expire and may not be used for future employment. Renewal is available through an expedited process established by DHHS.

Licensed child care and department-approved youth-serving programs may accept a valid letter as verification that the holder has met initial background check and training requirements. DHHS is authorized to adopt rules and regulations governing application procedures, background checks, renewal, fees, training providers, and data-sharing protections. This section does not apply where it would result in the loss of federal child care funding, including funds under the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant Act of 1990, or would otherwise violate federal requirements.

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Brian Hardin, Chairperson

