

addition, one of the things we have found in day care homes and elsewhere is that the job is underrecognized for its importance. If you talk about day care, you talk about taking care of children, primarily before school, although, of course, after they start school as well, there is day care services. But these are very vulnerable impressionable children. These are the fundamental years for the development of children and these individuals carrying for our children are very important. They are very important people, as important as our teachers who we all recognize are very important to our society, but for a long time unrecognized is the importance of day care providers and there we find as much as teachers are underpaid, day care providers are even "worsely" reimbursed. They are suffering, I think, from an underreimbursement that is reflected in Title XX and elsewhere, but we need to understand the need to upgrade their payment and we did that last year also by passing the credits for day care services. That should help with some assistance to providers, hopefully, by individuals better able to afford higher reimbursement rates and through the Title XX increases. But in recognizing the importance of providers, we also recognize that the training is important, that individuals that provide care for our children should have at least some training and four hours a year, which is what this bill calls for, is not an unreasonable amount to ask for individuals. That is eight hours over a two-year period. I checked on some other areas that we license. Embalmers, for instance, one of Senator Hannibal's favorites, the embalmers have a 16-year (sic) requirement for every two years for training. It would seem as though if we can spend 16 hours a year learning how to bury people, we can spend eight hours every two years trying to be sure we do the best job possible of raising and caring for our children. So the Department of Social Services would provide for the training, would assist through \$200,000 is how much this would be appropriated for grants and training, and they would contract locally for the provision of training programs for day care providers; also recognizing the importance of providers to provide a toll-free hotline under this bill so that providers can call and get answers to their questions which currently many have that don't feel certain about who to call and to get information. We also provide for providers the option to be voluntarily registered. By doing so they are able to participate in the federal food program which is of great assistance to these providers. By voluntarily registering, we then know who is out there providing what services. We have a minimal set of standards that they need to register. They