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LB 735, 925

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PRESIDENT MAURSTAD: Senator Brown, you're recognized to open.

SENATOR BROWN: Mr. President, members, AM2695 (sic--AM2693) is essentially LB 735, which was introduced last year and was advanced by the Health and Human Services Committee. LB 735 requires that training for early childhood professionals caring for children in home-based or center-based programs be increased and continued to reflect higher standards of quality. LB 735 also establishes a three-tiered system of licensure for child care and early childhood programs, licensed as following. Tier I consists of programs that meet the minimum applicable licensing requirements, the higher requirement that...what was talked about previously. Tier II consists of programs that meet the minimum applicable licensing requirements, have a history of compliance and meet additional quality criteria related to director and staff qualifications, staff training, adult-child ratios, the environment for learning, parental involvement, program evaluation, and other criteria recognized to influence program quality. Tier III consists of programs that meet minimum licensing requirements, have a history of compliance and are accredited by an accredited...accrediting organization approved by the department. This amendment I have filed but will talk about just for a few minutes and then will pull because it has received a great deal of consternation from a number of providers across the state and will, I believe, complicate the bill if it would happen to be added. But I do think it is interesting that the providers, who are very concerned about being included under this bill as...for businesses to be able to contract with them, are not willing to look at the aspects that are included in this amendment, and especially the tiered system, which is a voluntary system. We're not talking about reimbursement following the tiered system. It really should have little impact other than the impact it would have in providing to individuals who meet higher standards a certificate that they could post and then parents would know that that program has met some higher standards. It actually, in my estimation, would probably require less oversight or a different kind of oversight on the part of the state in that the accreditation process requires visitation by an individual or individuals who understand what the quality