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S.F. No. 21 – Office of Ombudsperson for Child Care Providers creation and appropriation

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S.F. No. 21 creates and funds a new Office of the Ombudsperson for Child Care Providers.

Section 1 [119B.27] directs the governor to appoint an ombudsperson for child care providers to serve a two-year term and carry out duties to support and inform child care providers with all areas of concern related to the provision of child care services, including licensing and regulatory compliance correction orders and appeals, service improvement, and application assistance.

The ombudsperson is authorized to hire staff, to access data necessary for discharging the duties of the office, and to receive copies of all provider correction orders, penalty assessments, and complaint investigations on a quarterly basis.

The ombudsperson must operate independently of the department of human services and must have experience providing child care, interpretation of laws and regulations, investigations, record keeping, report writing, public speaking, and management. A person is not eligible to serve as ombudsperson while holding public office and cannot have been previously employed by the department of human services or as a county licensor.

The commissioner of human services must provide the ombudsperson with office space, supplies, and other support, and must post provide child care providers with the contact information for the ombudsperson.

Section 2 is a fillable appropriation for ongoing money from the general fund to the Office of the Ombudsperson for Child Care Providers.