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Dear Nominating Committee,

I am writing this letter to express my desire to run for the position of President Elect of the Michigan Association for the Education of Young Children. I am a Mom, wife, daughter, teacher, education advocate, and chef extraordinaire. I have always had an interest in early childhood education and care. I've spent the last nineteen years immersed in the trenches of education. I have also invested my heart into advocating for families, children, and professionals in the field of education. I'm raising four children with my husband on a small sheep farm outside Leslie, Michigan. I love to travel, read, cook, and run.

My teaching career began in 2000. I am a turn of the century teacher and I actually had an administrator tell me that my problem was that I was too idealistic because I believed that I could change the world. I still do. I have worked largely in early childhood but also have spent time coaching, mentoring and developing young teachers as we strive to develop the future of our workforce. We must work to provide opportunities in our State for the youngest children and that is often at the heart of childcare, families and early education. This change is possible by working to provide education, opportunities and high quality experiences to our early childhood workforce who serve children and families in our State.

There is much work to be done and I would be ecstatic to share my expertise specifically in early education as I have extensive experience in early childhood grants; managing and expanding a program over the last nine years. I have been teaching and coordinating the early childhood programs for Leslie Public Schools. In 2010 when I took over the early childhood program, we had 34 students in the Great Start Readiness and Head Start Programs. We now have over 100 students in 7 blended and braided classrooms that are funded jointly by Early Childhood Special Education funding, the Great Start Readiness Program, Head Start and tuition payments from families. Running three childcare licenses, I maintain compliance between state licensing and all of the state and federal programs that I oversee and teach. I have a passion to expand programs that serve children, families and believe that lifting the early childhood profession is what brings high quality to those programs.

I'm a tireless advocate for families in education and my profession. I have spent time working in the political arena in both Lansing and Washington, D.C. facilitating policy development by telling our stories to lawmakers. I am unapologetically passionate but I also recognize that research and numbers bring evidence to our life stories and I like a compelling discussion that is laced with both.

Our association has restructured and is moving forward. As the state embarks on a new journey to support education with recertification for teachers, we will have an increased opportunity to network and make connections with elementary classrooms. We also have a gap in home provider membership and we need to address how we represent and advocate for all providers in the field and profession of

early childhood. Fostering those relationships will strengthen our opportunities to advocate for our profession and those we serve. As a teacher in a public school district, I can continue to build relationships between the early childhood profession and elementary teachers. My hope and goal as a President of the Michigan Association for The Education of Young Children is to continue the work we are doing and expand our relationships to increase membership, awareness and influence by welcoming everyone in the field and profession to our organization. Broadening our scope will raise our level of influence and allow us to make a great impact for families, children and our profession.

I was raised in a place that showed me that people do change the world. In the early eighties, I visited Berlin, East Germany. It was a dark, scary place surrounded by a wall that was not designed to keep anyone safe but to separate, divide and terrorize people. I was a child. I was frightened and glad to leave. I was still young the night we heard the amazing news that the wall was coming down. I still get chills as I write that sentence. I'll never forget that night. Some people climbed over by themselves, some lifted others over the wall, and some used ladders and anything they could find to get over the wall. There were even people who got down on the ground on their hands and knees and allowed those who were in need to step on them to get over that horrid wall. In the weeks to come, everyone went to chip away at that wall. With my family, I took a hammer and a chisel to the notorious Berlin Wall too. And in my darkest times, to this day, I remember that wall because life will build walls around us. I want to be the one who helps children and families over the walls and bring down the walls too. That's who I am and you want me on your team because you break down walls too. I'll bring my hammer and chisel.

I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Casey Lyn Sterle". The signature is written in black ink on a light-colored background.

Casey Sterle