



RE: Senate Bill 164
Position: Proponent/Support
Type: In-person
Conferee: Reva Wywadis

February 24, 2023

To the Senate Committee on Assessment and Taxation,

My name is Reva Wywadis and I am the executive director of Child Care Aware® of Eastern Kansas. Our agency is part of a statewide network of child care resource and referral agencies, Child Care Aware® of Kansas. Our primary role is helping families locate child care in their community to meet their needs, and to provide a host of supports to the child care workforce including professional development and continuing education, access to information and resources, and coaching services--- all focused on helping them improve their practices in their quest to offer high quality child care and early learning for young children. Because of our statewide network, any family or child care program in the entire state of Kansas can access services and support from the child care resource and referral agency serving their county.

I am here today to provide this testimony in **support of Senate Bill 164**. This bill would provide a tax credit for people working in the child care industry. Child care workers typically receive low pay considering the important work they do. A survey our agency conducted in June 2022 documented the average wage of a lead teacher in a center-based child care program in Shawnee County was \$12.97 per hour, with the average wage for assistant teachers being \$10.65 per hour. The research shows so clearly that the earliest experiences in a child's life lays the foundation for all later learning. In this time where so many communities lack enough child care to meet the needs of their local workforce, anything we can do as a state to support this workforce and entice them to stay in the field is important. This bill would take a positive step in supporting child care workers. I would encourage the committee to consider expanding the language in the bill so that it would also include family child care providers--- those individuals who are licensed to offer child care from their home. Throughout the state and particularly in rural communities, family child care homes play such an important role in providing care to meet the needs of children and families. They, too, deserve whatever support we can offer, as a state that cares so deeply about getting our youngest citizens off to a good start in life!

Thank you for your consideration of this bill.

Respectfully submitted,

Reva Wywadis, Executive Director