

March 6, 2023

Re: SB 282

Dear Senator and Members of the Committee,

I am Kimberly Harris, and I am a group family childcare provider in Pratt KS. I am located in SW/ South Central KS in a more rural area. I have lived previously in the Johnson County/ KC Metro area and have experience teaching in high populated areas and now low populated areas. I have been in Early Childhood for over 20 years and am currently pursuing national accreditation through NAFCC. I consider my childcare to be very high quality.

I am writing today to **AGREE** with most of the proposed bill.

I appreciate your interest in addressing the childcare crisis in Kansas. It is very difficult to find staff in my area. Allowing a 16-year-old to help or a 14-year-old volunteer and lowering some of the education requirements will be helpful. I strongly believe education is very important in our field and I strive to constantly learn more and will ask more of any staff I hire. However, I need to be able to get them in the door and working and currently it takes too much time waiting for background checks, classes, and CPR certificates. It would be nice to have a hiring provision that allows employee to work supervised while waiting for clearances.

A small handful of daycare providers (CCPC) advocate for all of us but don't consider all our needs and when we speak out; we are ridiculed or ignored. These providers typically live in high population centers and do not understand the hardship that **small town Kansas** is going through.

I know that there are concerns about raising ratios. However, there are a lot of unregulated daycares with high numbers of children in their care and they have no one checking in on them. I would rather have licensed professional family childcare providers care for a couple extra kids than someone who may not be considered safe or an environment that is harmful.

I believe that we are all in agreement that Kansas children deserve the best. For some children, just having a safe loving childcare to go to each day would be life changing. This bill, while not perfect, would help some of those children **thrive** instead of **survive**.

Thanks,

Kimberly Harris

Kimbers Kinders

Pratt KS

Kimberskinders@yahoo.com