



March 6, 2023

Jennifer Adhima, Executive Director
Kansas Head Start Association
Written-only Opponent Testimony SB 282
Senate Committee on Commerce

Chairwoman Erickson and members of the Committee:

Thank you for holding a hearing to address Senate Bill 282. I am the Executive Director of the Kansas Head Start Association (KHSB). KHSB is the voice for the Head Start and Early Head Start programs in Kansas. These programs provide early childhood education services to nearly 7,000 vulnerable young children and pregnant women across the state. In addition to supporting our state's Head Start programs, KHSB has a long history of advocating for policies, practices, and programs that support the health and well-being of all of our youngest Kansans and their families, which is why I am writing in opposition to SB 282.

While SB 282 is well-intended and aims to resolve the existing child care crisis, I am concerned that it misses the mark and will have a range of unintended, negative consequences. Our existing child care regulations keep Kansas children and their providers safe. Staff training requirements exist to ensure our licensed child care providers are equipped to provide high-quality care to the children they serve. Removing these training requirements jeopardizes the safety of the children in their care.

Similarly, increasing the number of children a provider may serve at one time has the potential to place children in danger. It is also not likely to dramatically increase the number of available child care slots across the state. Many providers will choose to stick with existing ratios and larger centers, who receive child care subsidy funding or funding from programs like Head Start, will not be able to increase the number of children they serve because it would put them out of compliance with federal regulations.

KHSB is fully aware that there is a massive child care shortage across our state and across our Nation, but this bill is not the solution to this issue. More must be done to recruit new providers into the field through career pathways that provide living wages, rather than risking the safety of children and burning out overworked providers with additional children to care for.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding SB 282. I am happy to serve as a resource to the Committee on this matter should you have further questions.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jennifer Adhima', is positioned below the text 'Respectfully submitted,'.

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