



**Testimony re: HB 2294**

**House Committee on Commerce, Labor, and Economic Development**

**2/27/2025**

Mr. Chairman Tarwater and Members of the Committee:

United WE is interested in finding policy solutions to the childcare crisis that is impacting the State of Kansas and the country at large. We know that infant care is often unprofitable due to the intensity of work involved and higher staffing costs per child. Streamlining licensure processes can help the entire childcare landscape by making the business model more sustainable. The more affordable and available childcare is in Kansans, the more likely women and their families will reach their economic potential.

Our organization recently commissioned two research studies and both illuminate trends in the licensing process and how burdensome redtape can create hardships in the industry without adding to the safety of the state's children. The [Economics of Childcare and Childcare Licensing](#) digs deep into the state's licensing framework and highlights seven different recommendations:

1. To facilitate continued consensus, rigorous data and evaluations of child care licensing (like those found in this report) could guide data-driven policy decisions on child care licensing and related policies.
2. The state of Kansas could consider convening the Child Care Systems Improvement Team (CC-SIT) to standardize child care licensing processes and fees across the state.
3. Required fingerprinting processes could be streamlined statewide to increase access during evenings and on weekends.
4. Policymakers could consider allocating permanent funding for child care licensing fees and workforce supports.
5. Targeted financial support could be allocated to providers to increase infant care slots in licensed child care to reduce bottlenecks and inefficiencies in the market.
6. The state could consider funding innovative grants to improve efficiency while maintaining quality of care.
7. A state-wide help line could be developed for providers to stay connected with state regulators and improve accountability within communities.

United WE also brought together a nationwide task force of respected thought leaders and business leaders to develop a [statement of principles](#) to guide policy work on childcare. This task force's work emphasized the impact of childcare availability on entrepreneurs and the fact that childcare is critical economic infrastructure. Affirming "a culture of practical engagement between regulators and providers" is a relevant principle from this research for your deliberations on HB 2294.

In addition to these quantitative studies, we have conducted [townhalls](#) across the state and heard from women in every part of Kansas about the challenges that barriers to childcare bring to their families. Repeatedly, we heard that childcare is too expensive, too scarce, and that

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providers spend too much time and give too many resources to regulations that do not impact the safety and wellbeing of the children in their care.

I'm pleased to support the bipartisan early childhood proposal before you today because we see this legislation as a step forward that addresses many of the issues that our quantitative and qualitative research illuminates. Data, best practices, and stories from the women of Kansas tell us loud and clear that Kansas women cannot maximize their skills and experiences in the workforce when they cannot find, or afford, childcare.

This legislation includes several provisions that align with our organization's vision for public policy solutions including clarifying professional qualification requirements and developing clear career progression pathways for early educators. United WE also supports the use of pilot programs for new licensure categories, eliminating the fee required for child care licensure, transferring certain child care programs to the Kansas Office of Early Childhood and separating licensing duties between the secretary for health and environment and the executive director of early childhood.

Our research is clear: solving our childcare crisis will require a sense of urgency, short-term and long-term policy solutions and bipartisan collaboration. United WE applauds the journey you all have taken so far to build consensus and our organization encourages the passage of this important legislation.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if we can assist your deliberations. Thank you for the opportunity to share United WE's perspective on this important issue for the state's workforce.

Sincerely,



Wendy D. Doyle  
President and CEO  
United WE