



**Proponent Testimony on SB120
Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee
February 4, 2021**

Chair Hilderbrand and Members of the Committee, my name is Rachel Marsh, CEO of the Children's Alliance of Kansas. The Alliance is an association of 18 private, non-profit child welfare agencies that collectively provide a full array of services for children and families in child abuse and neglect prevention, family preservation, foster care, adoption, independent living, and parent, youth, and child skill-building, mental health, and substance use treatment. One of the purposes of the Alliance is to advocate for public policy that strengthens child and family well-being in Kansas. We thank this Committee for considering legislation to support heightened legislative involvement and consideration of the Kansas child welfare system.

Simply stated, the Alliance supports a standing joint oversight committee on child welfare systems issues. Children in our state have benefitted greatly from the attention turned to foster care from the Child Welfare Systems Task Force in 2017 and 2018, and from the Special Committee on Foster Care Oversight during the 2020 interim. For example, the Task Force pushed Kansas to be one of the first to adopt Family First Prevention Services Act programs, which has safely reduced the number of children in foster care in Kansas. Additionally, the Task Force pushed for addressing the psychiatric residential treatment facility waitlist and length of stay, which has led to the addition of nearly 100 beds and systems changes by multiple state agencies.

Thank you again for your focus on the needs of children and families served by the child welfare system in Kansas. I am happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.

Members of the Children's Alliance of Kansas:

CALM, Emporia	KVC Kansas, Olathe
Cornerstones of Care, Overland Park	KidsTLC, Olathe
DCCCA, Lawrence	Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, Mayetta
Eckerd, Wichita	Restoration Family Services, Wichita
EmberHope, Wichita	Saint Francis Ministries, Salina
Florence Crittenton, Topeka	TFI Family Services, Topeka
FosterAdopt Connect, Olathe	The Children's Shelter, Lawrence
Great Circle, Lawrence	The Villages, Topeka
Kansas Children's Service League, Topeka	Wichita Children's Home, Wichita