

Proponent Testimony on HB 2785

Submitted To

House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee

By

Randy Bowman, Executive Director

Kansas Association of Local Health Departments (KALHD)

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On behalf of the Kansas Association of Local Health Departments (KALHD) and our 100 member Health Departments, I appreciate the opportunity to provide this testimony on House Bill 2785. We are a proponent for this bill.

This bill would align the twenty (20) named publicly funded programs, currently administered by one of four different agencies, under the focused direction of the Kansas Office of Early Childhood and define the functions of that office and its Executive Director. This proposal was informed by hundreds of stakeholders from across Kansas thanks to the work of the members of the Kansas Early Childhood Transition Task Force, all of whom are focused on improving the results of these programs for the betterment of our children. A focus that is in alignment with the work of our members to improve and protect the public health of all Kansans.

The services provided by our members are vital parts of the comprehensive service delivery systems in their respective communities, and as such, vary based upon the assessed needs and available resources of each community. The services provided by Local Health Departments (LHD) serve all ages, including some of the childhood services impacted by this legislation. However, not all members are able to provide these services, as they also encounter challenges in navigating the current structure as has been identified by the Kansas Early Childhood Transition Work Force. Our members look forward to the passage of this bill and the opportunity to work with the newly created Kansas Office of Early Childhood, both to continue and improve current services, and to increase access to services in our communities.

We ask you to support this bill by voting it favorably from this Committee and recommending it for passage by the Kansas House.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this discussion.