

February 9, 2024

**Re: Testimony presented to the House Transportation Committee on House Bill 2680**

**Presented by: Deona Bien Assistant Chief Nursing Officer Women and Children's, Overland Park Regional Medical Center and Mother of Aslyn Paige Ryan died at age 1 after being left in a hot car while with her sitter in 2004**



My name is Deona Bien and I am the mother of Aslyn Ryan who died on February 7<sup>th</sup>, 2004, just 6 days after her first birthday. Aslyn died from the results of heat stroke after her sitter left her in a hot car.

My daughter, Aslyn was a beautiful baby with an amazing personality. She loved to sing and loved to have her picture taken. On February 5, 2004, the last memory that I have of her before seeing her fight for her life, she was singing and dancing to a children's show she loved to watch, toddling through the kitchen wanting her father to read a book to her by tugging on his pant leg while I was rushing out the door to work.

Later that afternoon I received a call from my husband telling me to come to the children's hospital because Aslyn was being taken there by ambulance for difficulty breathing. When I arrived, I never imagined as a nurse the difficulty I would face walking into an ER, escorted by other nurses, while a full code was being performed on my child. I can still recall the flurry of activity in the room and the horrible labs and vital signs being called out, and then someone handing me a brown paper bag with the clothes they had cut off my daughter she had worn that morning.

She stabilized for a short time and spent 2 days in a pediatric Intensive care fighting for her life getting blood transfusions as her organs began to shut down. Her tiny body could no longer fight resulting in her death from complications of the anoxic brain injury after being left in a hot car two days earlier. No parent can understand the anguish of losing a child in this manner. Nor can they comprehend the heartbreak when doctors caring for their child tell them that the child that they once knew so beautiful, vibrant and sweet is gone. The mother side of me during that time prayed for a miracle but the healthcare side of me knew reality.

The most painful part of losing my daughter was going through a yearlong investigation, finding out that my sitter was unaware of the dangers of leaving a child in the car and had left her in the car not just on that day, but had done this before. I cannot help but think, what if one of those previous times someone

would have called police. Would she have done it again? Would Aslyn still be alive today? On that fateful day Aslyn had been left in the car for 50 minutes, nearly an hour. I began to educate myself and found that most people think leaving a child in a car for only a minute is ok, but that minute can become much longer without even realizing it.

After a parent loses a child they are left with 2 choices to curl in a ball or find a way to spend what time you would have parenting your child to save others from this heartache.

My mission, as you can see by my being present today, is that I chose to use what time I would have spent raising my daughter by doing everything I can to save other children, to save other parents and families from our family's heartache.

I wanted to share with you my beautiful Aslyn's story to convey the importance of why this bill is important in saving children's lives. I will always believe in my heart that telling her story helps to save lives. I know I will never know the faces or the names, but I am certain it has happened. I also feel that she is cheering me on from heaven for fighting to save other children for her.

Monday was Aslyn's angel day. Last week my baby girl would have turned 21. Instead of celebrating, I am here with you today asking you to please move HB 2680 forward. Please join me in honoring my daughter and keeping Kansas children safe. Thank you.