

Written Opponent Testimony
SB 282 Senate Commerce Committee
March 8, 2023

As a professional who has worked with child care providers in Kansas for over twenty years, I'm submitting my written testimony in opposition to SB282. I'm not sure of the intent of the bill or why it has come up with such speed, but it DOES NOT help in any way to fix the child care access issue we face. Overworked child care providers who work for below-poverty-level wages don't need this kind of legislation. They need real solutions like Kansas systematically addressing low wages, high staff turnover, and funding options for communities trying to address access problems.

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment has systems in place to clearly and consistently regulate child care for the safety of the children in care. I've been in many child care facilities for the purpose of providing technical assistance and environmental assessments, and I can tell you with confidence that increasing ratios is not the answer. The children of Kansas deserve to have the attention of a well-trained caregiver that has the capacity to provide high-quality care. Increasing the child-to-adult ratio and lowering the number of training hours is downright dangerous and a huge step back from where we've come. Additionally, lowering the age requirement of teachers and allowing 14-year-olds to count as an adult is a huge mistake. Many in this state have dedicated their lives to ensuring families can feel comfortable leaving their children in the hands of competent professionals and this bill endangers decades of progress. Child care providers are skilled workers who deserve to be treated and compensated as such. Quite simply, this bill puts children at risk.

The solution is strengthening the existing infrastructure in the form of financial support for both families and child care providers. Instead of working to weaken the system already in place, I would encourage you to find ways to support the great families of this state, as well as the child care professionals who work tirelessly to care for our greatest resource...our children.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dawn Flores". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "D".

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