



March 9, 2026

Dear Chair Billinger and Committee Members,

My name is Clare Sanford, and I represent New Horizon Academy, a multi-state child care center provider with 4 schools in the western Kansas City metro area. We are a private, family-owned organization headquartered in Minnesota that chose to expand in Kansas starting in 2022. We love being a part of the Kansas community and are actively researching opportunities to open additional schools here. With a commitment above all else to high quality early education and care, all of our schools become nationally accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children. I write today in support of SB513, a bill to provide direct-to-provider child care subsidy payments.

New Horizon Academy has a deep commitment to serving all families. In practice this means that all of our schools accept families using child care subsidy, and across our organization roughly one-third of our families use these supports. Of the 5 states in which we currently operate, only Kansas does not use a direct-to-provider payment system.

We believe SB513 creates operational efficiency, better allowing providers to understand the total amount of funding for which families have been authorized. This is extremely helpful in supporting families so they understand what they are receiving funding for (part time, full time, absent days, etc.) and what it covers. We as providers do a lot of direct work with families around applying for and staying authorized for child care subsidy, as it is a challenging and confusing system. Families just want and need the help so they can go to work and they can choose a quality child care for their kids.

Part of our commitment to serve all families extends into treating all families with dignity and respect. The current Kansas system of delivering child care subsidy dollars via Electronic Benefit Transfer cards at point-of-sale machines can create unnecessary stigma and shame. If a parent is using a different check-in or payment process than other families, everyone knows why. With direct-to-provider payments it is far easier to maintain family confidentiality. Billing is done directly between the provider and the government, and no one in the program needs to know the financial status of any family beyond the director and other administrative staff.

Thank you for this opportunity to support SB513.

Sincerely,

Clare Sanford  
Vice President of Government & Community Relations  
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