

State of Kansas

Senate Chamber

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House Education Committee Chair Huebert and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of SB 384, The Kansas Foster Care Academic Report Card bill. This bill was accepted by the Senate Education Committee upon my introduction.

In the last 6 months (July 1 through January 1) 2,397 children were placed in Foster Care. Why so many?

- 101 for abandonment
- 188 for caretakers inability to cope
- 104 for child's behavior problem
- 245 for emotional abuse
- 341 for lack of supervision
- 464 for neglect
- 148 for other
- 204 for parents substance abuse
- 457 for physical abuse
- 125 for sexual abuse
- And 20 for truancy

When you think of these categories, only three would be considered to directly relate to the behavior of the child.

But when the child isn't within the care of the foster parent, our schools take on the role of *in loco parentis*. We know from testimony in the Senate Education Committee that schools don't necessarily know when a student within a school is a Foster Child. We can only imagine what additional services these children need and deserve without faculty or staff aware of the need.

This Foster Child Report Card – SB 384 – will require our state to shed light on how our Foster Children are achieving, from an academic standpoint, in the *in loco parentis* environment. Today, we are only able to guess at graduation rates or academic progress. I truly believe that only with the accurate data collection and reporting required with this legislation will we be able to better address the very global needs of our Foster Children in Kansas.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Molly Baumgardner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Molly Baumgardner
Kansas Senate Education Chair