



Kansas Family Voice Testimony in Support of H.B. 2809

House Federal & State Affairs Committee

Brittany Jones

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Chairman Carpenter, and members of the Committee, my name is Brittany Jones. I am an attorney and the Director of Policy and Engagement for Kansas Family Voice. Kansas Family Voice cares deeply about ensuring women receive the support and care they need when they are facing a difficult pregnancy or when interested in adoption. H.B. 2809 will connect families with real life services that can help them in their decisions.

H.B. 2809 creates the Every Mom Matters Act which creates a hotline that connects individuals with information and resources. The EMMA Hotline requires the hotline provider to be able to give callers certain information about child birth, healthy choices, and adoption depending on their inquiry. This can be a pipeline to getting women help they need quickly without ever having to leave their home.

Our state is already facing a population problem in Kansas. Our population growth rate is growing much more slowly than expected and even more slowly than other states.¹ Last year we had the lowest birth rate we have had in Kansas since we started keeping records.² Arming women with support and resources while they are pregnant may help them carry healthy pregnancies to term and help them parent after they give birth.

Further, we have families that want to adopt that do not know where to begin while there are thousands of children who are waiting to be brought into a forever home. There also women who want to place their child for adoption who do not know what to do. The EMMA hotline can arm these families with information and assistance to walk with them through their adoption journey and be supportive long after.

Four other states have created similar hotlines. A hotline like this could provide a huge benefit to women who may not have access to assistance in their community. The EMMA hotline can help ensure children are raised in healthy loving homes. After COVID-19 so many people began to move away from going in physical locations. Telehealth or other online support began to become the norm for many families. The EMMA Hotline can help get information to those who may not have the means or ability to travel equipping them with information and connection to resources.

¹ Kansas' population to grow more slowly than previously predicted, new report finds, KCUR, (Aug. 3, 2023), <https://www.kcur.org/2023-08-03/kansas-population-growth>

² Kansas Preliminary Birth Report 2022, [https://www.kdhe.ks.gov/DocumentCenter/View/29633/Preliminary-Birth-Report-2022-PDF#:~:text=The%20preliminary%20birth%20rate%20for,since%202008%20\(Figure%201\).](https://www.kdhe.ks.gov/DocumentCenter/View/29633/Preliminary-Birth-Report-2022-PDF#:~:text=The%20preliminary%20birth%20rate%20for,since%202008%20(Figure%201).)



Supplying moms and families with more information and resources can only assist them as they make decisions about growing their family. There are already individuals and nonprofits who are doing the amazing work of walking besides moms and families in this process. The EMMA Hotline can help connect these servants and help women get access to them even faster.

We believe that EMMA will have expansive benefits to our state, uplifting women and families, and giving them resources for their futures. It will help counteract a downward trend in our states population and provide individuals with hope. For all these reasons, I ask that you report H.B. 2809, the Ever Mom Matters Act, favorably for passage.

Thank you!