



The Children's Campus of Kansas City
444 Minnesota Avenue, Suite 200
Kansas City, KS 66101
P 913.342.1110
F 913.342.3632
www.thefamilyconservancy.org

March 6, 2024

Paula Neth, President & CEO
The Family Conservancy
Written-Only Proponent Testimony on HB 2785
House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development

Chair Tarwater and members of the Committee:

I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2785 on behalf of The Family Conservancy (TFC). I am Paula Neth, President & CEO of TFC – a nonprofit agency designed to help children take advantage of the most critical period of human development by improving early learning environments and equipping parents and caregivers to make the most of the time they spend with young children.

Child care providers in Kansas are struggling to keep their doors open while parents struggle to find affordable, safe, high-quality care. The past three years have unequivocally proven child care's critical role in ensuring parents can work, children can learn, and the economy can thrive.

Without access to stable child care, parents oftentimes piece together several different options, which – aside from potential health and safety concerns – does not provide the continuity and structure young children need. Furthermore, without access to reliable, affordable care, families' ability to build and advance their careers and earning potential is seriously inhibited. Research estimates the economic impact of insufficient child care on parents, employers, and taxpayers at \$57 billion dollars in lost earnings, productivity, and revenue, annually.

Repairing our child care system requires transformative action and the Office of Early Childhood would allow us to better support Kansas children and families by centralizing all services under one existing agency. Bringing the existing programs related to child care, home visiting services, and Head Start together would streamline the early childhood system.

TFC believes that collaboration in a unified office increases accountability to eliminate duplication and overlap and increase efficiency for providers and families. This bill will streamline how we provide services, reducing bureaucratic burdens so more Kansas businesses, child care providers, and families can easily navigate the system and receive support that meets their needs.

We ask that you support HB 2785 and other efforts to increase access to high-quality and affordable child care for all Kansans. Thank you for your time and consideration, and I would be glad to engage in dialog around this topic (pneth@thefamilyconservancy.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paula Neth".

Paula Neth
President & CEO

Helping Children. Strengthening Families.



Cell: 720.837.3402



The Children's Campus of Kansas City
444 Minnesota Avenue, Suite 200
Kansas City, KS 66101
P 913.342.1110
F 913.342.3632
www.thefamilyconservancy.org

Helping Children. Strengthening Families.

