



March 6, 2023

To Chairperson Erickson and Members of the Senate Commerce Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony regarding SB 282. Working families need access to child care that enables them to enter and stay in the workforce, supporting our state's economic wellbeing. Currently, there is not enough access to child care options to meet the needs of families in our state. However, we cannot attempt to address capacity without regard for quality and safety. Research clearly shows the connection between well-trained, qualified and competent caregivers and the quality of care provided, and how early experiences lay the foundation for all later learning in a child's life. This bill proposes increasing staff to child ratios, decreasing training requirements, and reducing the minimum age of caregivers, all of which have the potential to negatively impact the quality and safety of care provided. Additionally, asking already overworked and undercompensated providers to take more children into their care will likely lead to burnout and further staffing challenges as good teachers leave the early childhood field. It is also important to note that components of this legislation will put Kansas out of compliance with federal requirements, putting our state at risk of losing federal funding that supports so many vital early childhood programs and services. **We strongly oppose SB 282 for these and many other reasons.**

While we applaud your desire to help address child care capacity to support working families, this approach is not the way. We cannot implement strategies that compromise the health and safety of young children. Instead, more must be done to bring additional workers into the child care field to address capacity needs. The child care workforce is worthy of support for the important job they are tasked to do---- provide safe, high-quality early learning experiences for our most treasured resource, our children.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Reva Wywadis".

Reva Wywadis, Executive Director