

Testimony Senate Public Health and Welfare  
February 7, 2017 In support of SB 95  
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**"A good political leader is one who, with the interests of all in mind, seizes the moment in a spirit of openness and pragmatism." Pope Francis to US Congress in September 2015**

I like this quote from Pope Francis as I hope this committee will be open to the practical policy changes in SB 95.

When you have been part of this legislative process as long as I have, you come to know history. I want to share a piece of that history and really it is recent history. The policies that we are asking you to change were passed into law by recent legislative actions. For the 25 years prior SRS now called DCF made determinations about these rules and policies within their department. None of these policies had to be made into laws. Perhaps those of us who have come to know the struggles of those these changes will assist did not represent them well enough. So I start with gratitude for Senators Schmidt and Kelly for co-sponsoring this legislation.

**Child Care for Infants:**

Other testimony will cover the expense and unavailability of child care for infants. I just want to add some practical wisdom from my mother – a mother of 12. She had much wisdom and always expressed great empathy for pregnant women. As she witnessed the arrival of her 40 grandchildren and subsequent 30 greats she mused to me, "I don't think women today take good enough care of themselves after childbirth. Also people do not realize how much care one infant takes". I ask you to remember that the women who qualify for TANF are women who most likely do not have a support system around them. All research shows that the infant's brain development is crucial during this time of the child's life.

**Child Care in support of Parent Education:**

When I first came to Kansas City in 1996, I lived with one of our Sisters who led a job-training program at El Centro. The program taught the basic skills for applying and maintaining a job and computer skills that would make the women and men employable. I watched this program work. It enabled these students to obtain living wage jobs that had benefits. Child care was an essential element for the program to work.

**Food Stamp Waiver:**

I have learned through the years that it is a given fact that it is much easier to get okayed for Social Security Disability if you have a physical disability than if you have a mental illness. When I have had conversations with workers in mental health settings, their ability to procure SNAP benefits for their clients helps them to get housing and stabilize a person.

I want to conclude with a recent experience that I had here in the Capitol. I was incognito in the bathroom in the Visitors Center. Suddenly I hear "OOOOH! AWWWWWW! This is sooooo beautiful! I am never going to leave here!" The exclamations continued as these third grades from a Reading Roadmap group in Olathe took care of their bathroom business. I share this story because I believe all of us can get used to our abundance.

Since 1858 the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth have placed our own abundance at the service of those who struggle. Please support this legislation.

Senate Public Health and Welfare

Date 2.7.17

Attachment 4