



February 3, 2020

To members of the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee,

As the executive director of a child care resource and referral agency, and as a past licensed and nationally accredited family child care provider, **I provide this testimony in favor of Senate Bill 312.** This bill would support the foundational child care licensing requirements in place to protect the basic health and safety of children in child care in Kansas. It is already unlawful to conduct or maintain a child care facility without a temporary permit or license, yet KDHE has limited authority under the current law to deter illegal care or to influence compliance with licensing requirements. Senate bill 312 is intended to protect children, prevent harm, and move unlicensed providers into licensed facility status.

Working families in Kansas deserve the right to have access to safe child care that allows them to enter the workforce and maintain employment. Our youngest children deserve to get off to the best possible start in life. Child care licensing helps to ensure that individuals caring for children have a background check, foundational basic health and safety training, ongoing continuing education that helps them better understand how to support a child's health and development, and access to ongoing assistance and support that help them meet the needs of all children in care. Moving illegal care providers into a regulated status means that they will have an initial and annual health and safety inspection, and that parents can make an informed child care choice by having access to those inspection findings.

ERC Resource & Referral, Inc., dba Child Care Aware® of Eastern Kansas, serves as the state's parent resource center. Every day, families from throughout the state of Kansas seeking child care contact us for referral lists as well as information on how to choose safe and healthy child care --- things to look for, questions to ask, and how to check the compliance history of a child care program. Because this bill would move more providers into the regulated system, it will give families more child care options.

Lastly, passage of this bill supports the current network of already licensed child care providers in our state that comply with existing regulations and attain ongoing training, working hard to support working families and give young children the early learning experience that sets them on the path to success in school and beyond. This bill would move illegal providers into the existing system, helping to ensure that all child care providers are equally held to the same standard of foundational care for our young children.

I encourage you to support the passage of SB 312.

Please feel free to contact me at 785-440-4507 or by email reva@east.ks.childcareaware.org if you have any questions regarding this testimony. Thank you for your consideration for doing what is best for children and families in our state.

Respectfully submitted,

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

Reva Wywadis, Executive Director