

House Bill No. 2371

House Children and Seniors Committee

February 19, 2021

Chairwoman Concannon and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2371. My name is Kelli Mengarelli. I currently work for Crawford County Mental Health as the Family Navigator for the Early Childhood Block Grant. I work closely with early childhood providers who are educating and caring for children that have one or more “at-risk” qualifiers set forth by the Children’s Cabinet with the goal of school readiness.

The measures outlined in HB 2371 address the issue of basic needs for families, especially mothers with young children, being met. By removing the child support requirements for child care subsidy and SNAP eligibility, single parents are free to apply without fear. When these basic needs are being met, it assists parents in being better caregivers.

The childcare providers that I work with see parent’s everyday who are doing their best to provide their children with all the opportunities that they themselves may or may not have been afforded. By alleviating the restrictions that HB 2371 is purposing, our early childhood providers will be equipped with new tools to offer parents in order to meet some of their needs. Assisting parents with a child care subsidy so that they can return to school full time and still be able to afford to place their child in a high quality early learning environment is an investment that will pay it forward not only in the near future but in subsequent generations as well.

I am strongly in support of the improvements that HB 2371 is seeking to make. It should be easier for parents to meet their basic needs for food and high quality child care, particularly if they are seeking postsecondary education. This bill introduces simple but significant changes that will benefit Kansas children, parents, and the economy as a whole.

Sincerely,



Kelli Mengarelli

Crawford County Mental Health

ECBG Family Navigator

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