



**Proponent Testimony on HB2116 – Written Only
House Children and Seniors
February 2, 2021**

Chair Concannon and Members of the Committee, my name is Rachel Marsh, CEO of the Children's Alliance of Kansas. The Alliance is an association of 18 private, non-profit child welfare agencies that collectively provide a full array of services for children and families in child abuse and neglect prevention, family preservation, foster care, adoption, independent living, and parent, youth, and child skill-building, mental health, and substance use treatment. One of the purposes of the Alliance is to advocate for public policy that strengthens child and family well-being in Kansas. We thank this Committee for considering this important support for caregivers of youth in foster care.

Children's Alliance members work each day to coordinate care and support for children placed in foster care. Providers work directly with generous, committed adults who volunteer to care for children with unique needs due to a history of trauma, child maltreatment, or neglect. Youth in foster care have multiple appointments for case management, court, and behavioral health appointments. They need time to visit with parents, siblings, and extended family. Youth in care may need focused, frequent caregiver attention for health treatments, behavior modification efforts, or trauma-informed strategies developed with therapists. Many children in care are placed together with siblings, who also have these needs, but at different times or in different ways. Adults that step forward to care for children in foster care need extensive support, including child care. The Children's Alliance supports HB2116 as an essential bill ensuring access to child care assistance for foster caregivers – and therefore an essential bill ensuring high-quality care for foster children.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our support of HB2116.

Members of the Children's Alliance of Kansas:

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| CALM, Emporia | KVC Kansas, Olathe |
| Cornerstones of Care, Overland Park | KidsTLC, Olathe |
| DCCCA, Lawrence | Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, Mayetta |
| Eckerd, Wichita | Restoration Family Services, Wichita |
| EmberHope, Wichita | Saint Francis Ministries, Salina |
| Florence Crittenton, Topeka | TFI Family Services, Topeka |
| FosterAdopt Connect, Olathe | The Children's Shelter, Lawrence |
| Great Circle, Lawrence | The Villages, Topeka |
| Kansas Children's Service League, Topeka | Wichita Children's Home, Wichita |