

Dodge City Ford County



DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

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To: Chairman, Senator Renee Erickson and Senate Commerce Committee Members
From: Joann Knight, Executive Director
Date: March 7, 2023
Subject: Testimony in support of Senate Bill 282

Dear Chairman, Senator Renee Erickson and Senate Commerce Committee Members:

Thank you for considering our testimony on behalf of the Dodge City/Ford County Development Corporation regarding Senate Bill 282. The Dodge City/Ford County Development Corporation is supportive of establishing licensing requirements relating to capacity and staff-to-child ratios, eliminating license fees and training requirements, and developing and operating pilot programs to increase day care facility availability and capacity.

Ford County has an extreme childcare shortage, 2064 children, under 6 years of age, are in need of childcare. Access to high-quality, affordable childcare allows parents to enter the workforce. Many local businesses have expressed workforce concerns.

The Dodge City/Ford County Development Corporation is a non-profit organization that promotes growth and development of existing businesses and pursues quality new business to help sustain the economic vitality of the area. The childcare industry is an important economic driver within the state. Our organization created a committee to address our childcare needs in 2019. We have held free dual language seminars on how to become a licensed providers, assisted providers and centers with small grants to open and expand, and are currently in the process of creating a 501(c)(3) childcare organization to build a new facility.

For Dodge City to continue to grow, our community must work together to increase affordable quality childcare facilities. Senate Bill 282 will assist us to increase our affordable and quality childcare. Please contact me if you have any questions. Thank you for your consideration and support.

Sincerely,

Joann Knight
Executive Director