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FOR HEALTHY LIVING
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Written Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 95

Senate Public Health & Welfare Committee Tuesday, February 7, 2017

Chairwoman Schmidt and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of House Bill 95, the "SOAR" Act (Strategic Opportunities to Achieve Results), which will help maximize positive outcomes for Kansas children and families.

The Kansas State Alliance of YMCAs represents the collective voice and impact of 10 Kansas Y Associations serving 33 communities and 540,000 Kansans all throughout the state. Our charitable work strengthens communities by advancing the goals of youth development, healthy living and social responsibility.

The YMCA has a long history of helping prepare children and families for life-long success to ensure that everyone regardless of age, income or background, has the opportunity to thrive. As a nonprofit organization, the Y plays a critical role in delivering quality early learning programs to infants, toddlers and preschoolers, and supporting working families. As such, we feel the modest reforms proposed in the SOAR Act will help provide more pathways to success for vulnerable Kansans. More specifically, the bill's proposed allowance of increased educational/job training attainment for parents with dependent children and the extension of support to single mothers to 12-months before TANF work requirements commence is very much aligned with the Kansas Alliance of YMCA's top priority of *"increasing access, affordability and quality of early learning, childcare and after school youth programs and services to help every child in Kansas reach their full potential."*

The SOAR Act helps create a better system of supports and learning opportunities that meet the needs of children, families and communities at large. We urge your support of Senate Bill 95.

Thank you for your consideration.

---Jennifer Bruning, Executive Director

KANSAS STATE ALLIANCE OF YMCAS
Jennifer Bruning, Executive Director
P 816 679 8251 E JBruning@KSYMCA.org
KSYMCA.org

Senate Public Health and Welfare

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