

MARTHA J. "MOLLY" BAUMGARDNER
STATE SENATOR, 37TH DISTRICT
29467 MASTERS COURT
LOUISBURG, KANSAS 66053
(913) 709-1069



ROOM 445-S, STATE CAPITOL
TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612
OFFICE: (785) 296-7368
molly.baumgardner@senate.ks.gov

Chair Hilderbrand and fellow committee members:

Last month, I introduced what is now SB 460 to the exempt Assessment and Taxation Committee for our consideration this session. I stand in firm support of requiring a CARE (child abuse review and evaluation) examination referral for all children five years of age or younger when there is any investigation of physical abuse or neglect.

Many of you have heard the latest news coverage involving 3-year-old Olivia Jansen. She was killed at the hands of her father and her father's girlfriend in July 2020. Though her grandparents, Elisabeth and Howard Hansen II, contacted law enforcement and DCF to report their concerns of abuse and neglect, Olivia did not receive a CARE examination. On February 11, her father pleaded guilty. Olivia's autopsy showed signs of abuse.

SB 460 creates the training process for forensic evaluation services to a child that may be victim to physical abuse, emotional abuse, medical neglect or physical neglect. The Child Welfare Oversight Committee has learned from testimony during the interim that determining the difference between atypical physical development of a child and actual physical abuse, a childhood injury versus an injury due to abuse, or abnormal physiology compared to abnormal physiology due to neglect or abuse is out of the scope of most pediatricians or family practice physicians.

Specialized training is essential! Fortunately, the pilot program that was supported by DCF last year offers us a thoughtful approach. Kansans are fortunate to have a small handful of forensic trained pediatricians and family practice physicians. They are willing to provide additional training that includes medical-based screening and forensic evidence collection to physicians throughout our state. Just as important, SB 460 establishes a child abuse review and evaluation fund to pay for CARE exams and training for CARE providers.

When we consider the needs of our state, protecting our vulnerable children and families with a CARE exam is an important step beyond visual contact by law enforcement or agency workers. I urge your support of SB 460.

Respectfully submitted,

Molly Baumgardner
Kansas Senate, 37th District