

Written Testimony for HF XXXX (West): Harvey's Law

Dear Representative West,

My name is Maranda Hadley, and my family was part of the same daycare community where the tragic death of 11-month-old Harvey occurred. Our son was enrolled in the same infant classroom.

Like so many others, we have been devastated by what happened. As parents, it is impossible to fully put into words the fear and heartbreak that comes with knowing our child was in that same environment. We continue to hold Harvey's family in our hearts, and we are committed to doing what we can to help ensure this never happens again.

We strongly support the updated bill requiring cameras in Minnesota daycare centers. We believe this is a critical step toward transparency, accountability, and, most importantly, protecting vulnerable children who cannot speak for themselves. Parents place immense trust in licensed daycare providers, and safeguards must reflect the seriousness of that responsibility.

We have seen the Muklebust family's call to action and the upcoming press conference and March 10th testimony at the State Capitol. We are grateful for your leadership in advancing this legislation and for your recognition that hearing directly from impacted families is powerful.

No family should ever endure what Harvey's family has experienced, and no parent should question whether their child is safe in a licensed care facility.

Thank you for your work on this issue and for your commitment to protecting Minnesota's children.

Sincerely,

Maranda Hadley

Rep. West,

Written Testimony for HF XXXX (West): Harvey's Law

I am so glad to see the proposed bill HF1915 and companion bill 2723.

We spoke a few years ago about my child being abused by daycare staff. The DHS investigation resulted in two findings- 1. the teacher did abuse my child and 2. The abuse resulted in serious maltreatment of a child.

The daycare had no cameras. The daycare lawyers appealed the finding and got the second charge removed because we had no evidence (despite an eyewitness who saw the abuse take place and reported it to DHS) of the bruise and tailbone injury. We had no evidence because nearly a month passed by before I was notified by the daycare. I feel they did this intentionally to allow the evidence to heal and prevent a medical report from a doctor. I had no idea my 2 yr old- barely verbal- child had been mistreated.

The woman who abused my child is currently working with children at that daycare. A person found guilty of child abuse- the first charge remained- is still working with children. How can this be allowable?

Had there been cameras in the daycare the evidence would have been enough to keep that second charge, and would have barred her from working with vulnerable populations like children and vulnerable adults.

I am so happy to see these bills proposed. Thank you for continuing to work on this important issue for MN families.

I'm gutted to mention an eerily similar incident happened in 2016 at the same daycare. Same people involved, same story, same cover up. Cameras would've helped that family too.

Please let me know if my story can help in anyway.

Lisa Elliott

Written Testimony for HF XXXX (West): Harvey's Law

I'm writing in support of Harvey's Law.

It's hard to put into words the feelings around the tragedy that occurred in September of 2025. Matt, my husband, and I had Harvey's birthday party invitation on our fridge that week, and I had just reached out to Catt about what type of gift would be good for the little guy's birthday. You can imagine how devastating it was to get the news then that week about Harvey's death. Words can't begin describe our feelings after that. There was a jarring sensation when we attended his funeral the week after, knowing everyone should have been at his birthday. Surreal. An unspeakable pit in the stomach.

Harvey's light still shined that day and felt apparent. Hunter, Catt, and Declan were as strong as anybody could be during that time. I know they have navigated a course of justice, loss, and unknown territory they never thought they'd be navigating or never wanted to in the first place. Touching base with them, as they are doing their best to keep it together, has been so inspiring and humbling, but also hard and frustrating that they would even have to be in a position like this. To a lose a son, a brother, a grandson, a nephew.

Justice can also come in the form of hope. And that's what I want to refocus on here. The type of justice that gives hope for the future. That something like this can be prevented from happening again, or at least make it more challenging. I've talked with a few other friends who have directly benefited from cameras in their daycare protecting their kids from abuse, and while we don't have kids ourselves, the bright shining light of all the kids in our life -- both family and friends -- have been such an inspiration and joy to be experienced, as they are all the extension of people we love so much in life. And if there's something that can be done to create more accountability and hope toward prevention of murder—that is not an easy thing to write—then we urge this committee to send this law through.

I've appreciated your work, Representative Kotyza- Witthun, on helping with the Counseling Compact in the past to get it passed in the state for more access to mental healthcare. And as a therapist, I know justice with hope can also be helpful toward healing. I don't know what healing looks like for Hunter and Catt on the road ahead, but I do know they are using their energy, their power, and their hearts for something important, good, and right, which undoubtedly is on the road to healing. Please support this law and support all families who have been broken by these types of tragedies, but also the hope that we can and should do better and be the light in the world from the eyes of Harvey.

Luke Yost (along with support from Matt)

LPCC (Licensed Professional Clinical Counselor)

Written Testimony for HF XXXX (West): Harvey's Law

Dear Members of the Committee,

I am writing in strong support of Harvey's Law and the requirement to install cameras in infant and toddler classrooms within licensed child care centers.

I come before you not only as a close friend of the family presenting this bill, but also as a mother and a former childcare worker. I have experienced this issue from both sides — as a parent placing my trust in caregivers, and as a professional entrusted with the safety and wellbeing of young children. From both perspectives, I firmly believe that a child's safety is non-negotiable.

Infants and toddlers are among the most vulnerable members of our communities. They cannot clearly communicate mistreatment, defend themselves, or advocate for their own protection. As parents, we place extraordinary faith in childcare providers each day. We assume that policies are being followed, that staff are properly trained, and that our children are safe. Most childcare professionals work tirelessly and compassionately to uphold that trust. However, when safety concerns arise, verbal reports alone can quickly become "he said/she said" situations — particularly when the only witnesses are children who cannot speak for themselves.

During my time working in a childcare facility, I encountered situations where colleagues demonstrated questionable behavior that raised immediate red flags. I was fortunate to work for leadership that took concerns seriously and acted swiftly. Staff were investigated and, when necessary, dismissed. I am deeply grateful for that accountability. However, I also recognize that not every facility responds in the same way. Even in well-managed centers, the absence of video documentation can leave room for doubt, delay, or dispute.

Cameras are not about assuming guilt or creating a culture of distrust. They are about creating transparency, accountability, and protection — for children and for staff. Video documentation provides clarity when questions arise, reinforces adherence to training and safety protocols, and serves as a powerful deterrent to misconduct. It protects dedicated caregivers just as much as it protects children.

I understand concerns surrounding privacy and access to footage. These are valid considerations that deserve thoughtful safeguards. In my view, a secure system in which access is limited strictly to designated leadership, ownership, and law enforcement when necessary would strike an appropriate balance. I do not believe unrestricted live-stream access for parents is necessary and, in fact, could introduce cybersecurity risks. As a parent, I do not require constant live viewing to feel secure. Knowing that recordings exist — securely stored and accessible only when needed for safety purposes — provides meaningful peace of mind.

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This bill is ultimately about prevention and protection. It is about ensuring that when parents entrust their most precious loved ones to a childcare facility, there are clear, reliable systems in place to safeguard them. It is about supporting ethical childcare professionals who welcome accountability and transparency. And most importantly, it is about giving a voice and protection to children who cannot yet speak for themselves.

I respectfully urge you to support Harvey's Law and take this important step toward strengthening child safety in our state.

Thank you for your time, your leadership, and your commitment to protecting our youngest citizens.

Sincerely,

Alyssa Longerbone

Written Testimony for HF XXXX (West): Harvey's Law

Dear members of the committee,

Thank you for taking the time to hear these stories today. My name is Jessica Merchant, and nearly 10 years ago my oldest son William was the victim of NAHT (non-accidental head trauma) at daycare. By all accounts, he should not have survived that day: swelling of his brain so bad it required two emergency decompressions in 48 hours (basically cutting two large plates out of his skull to release the pressure), along with a host of other interventions to keep his body alive to see if he was still there if he came out of the coma. So serious were his injuries that the doctors asked if we wanted to keep him on life support in the days after his injury-most didn't seem to think he was going to make it. Thankfully, he did. We lived in the hospital for almost five months; and 8+ surgeries later, we were able to take him home. He had defeated the immediate odds, but the long-term prognosis was not good. He had global delays in speech, swallowing, eating, moving, talking. He could hardly support his head and trunk for more than short bits of time. He had a g-tube placed for nutrition, and a shunt placed to drain the extra cerebral spinal fluid off his brain. He vomited constantly, seized, and was generally miserable and in pain most of the time. When he wasn't, his smile lit up the room and drew anyone in his orbit to him.

As the years have gone on, he has continued to defy the odds. Now in fifth grade, he can walk with support, greet friends by name, has 150 or more books memorized, loves to sing, be tickled, and go to Menard's (primarily for the elevator and the jingle playing throughout the store). He is generally healthy and happy, which is more than we could have hoped for. But even as he continues to progress, the damage has been done, and it is irreparable. He will live with us as long as we are able to care for him. He will never be independent. The list of things he can't do is so much longer than anyone who doesn't live life with a disabled child can imagine. Our life is harder than most can imagine: our entire days revolve around what will keep him emotionally regulated and physically healthy. We spend our days lately considering trialing a drug with serious side effects to control his rages, which kind of special education room will suit his needs best in middle as we leave the relative safety of elementary, and whether his sensory sensitivities are causing emotional harm to our other two children, who don't understand why he yells and screams and melts down most of the time they are around.

My story is not unique. This keeps happening because those responsible are not held accountable. His abuser was found guilty of 1st degree assault of a minor (a 13-month-old minor) and was sentenced to 90 DAYS in jail and probation. 90 DAYS. For the life sentence they inflicted on my child and our entire lives. Please pass this bill. We must keep our children safe, and this is one very important step in that direction.

Jessica Merchant

Written Testimony for HF XXXX (West): Harvey's Law

Madam Chair and Members,

Let me start with a simple scenario.

Imagine walking into a bank to open an account and deposit your hard-earned money. You look around and notice something missing—no cameras. Most people would hesitate. Many would walk right back out. Not because they assume wrongdoing, but because the absence of security cameras creates uncertainty. When it comes to protecting money, we expect transparency as a baseline.

I work in the financial services industry, where accountability is fundamental. In many ways, our world closely parallels that of daycare centers. Advisors, like childcare providers, are licensed, background-checked, audited, and continuously supervised. Cameras in areas where clients' assets are held are standard practice—not as an accusation, but as a safeguard for both clients and professionals. We accept these measures because accountability is what helps build trust.

Now contrast that with childcare.

Most of us would agree that a child's life is infinitely more valuable than some dollars or stock certificates in a bank vault. And yet, when you compare the systems we've built, the rules and regulations suggest otherwise. We demand extraordinary oversight to safeguard financial assets, but far less transparency when we entrust someone with our children.

Harvey's Law is not about assuming bad intent. It is about ensuring responsibility when the unthinkable happens—and clarity when families need answers. Just as cameras in banks protect honest employees and deter misconduct, cameras in infant and toddler rooms create transparency, protect caregivers who do the right thing every day, and most importantly, protect children who cannot speak for themselves.

In financial services, being responsible is not optional. It is the cost of trust. Our children deserve at least that same standard of care.

I understand there are reservations around video access and who might bear the costs of upgrading security. I get that. But let's not allow perfection to get in the way of meaningful progress. Harvey's Law is a reasonable, measured step to align our regulations with our values. If we are willing to require rigorous oversight to protect money, we should be willing, without hesitation, to require accountability to protect our children. Thank you.

Michael Pohl

Written Testimony for HF XXXX (West): Harvey's Law

To the Members of the Committee,

My name is Victoria Cannon, and I am writing in support of Harvey's Law. I speak both as a mother of three children and as an Infant/Toddler Director at a childcare center in Grand Forks, North Dakota. Every day, I am entrusted with the care and safety of very young children who cannot yet advocate for themselves. That responsibility is something I take deeply to heart.

While I did not personally know Harvey, no child or family should ever have to experience the tragedy that led to this legislation. Harvey and his family deserve for something meaningful to come from their loss, and passing this law is one way to help ensure stronger protections for other children in the future. As both a parent and an early childhood professional, I believe transparency and accountability are essential in childcare settings. Parents place an extraordinary amount of trust in childcare providers. They hand over the most important people in their lives and trust that their children will be safe, nurtured, and protected. Policies like Harvey's Law help strengthen that trust by creating an additional layer of accountability and protection for children, families, and childcare providers alike.

In my professional experience, the vast majority of childcare providers are compassionate, hardworking individuals who genuinely care about children. Cameras are not about assuming wrongdoing; they are about creating transparency and reassurance. When implemented appropriately, they can protect children, provide peace of mind for families, and also protect staff by offering objective documentation if questions or concerns arise.

As a mother, I think about my own children and the vulnerability of infants and toddlers who cannot fully communicate what happens during their day. Safeguards like those proposed in Harvey's Law can help ensure that children are protected and that families feel confident in the environments caring for them.

Children deserve safe environments, and families deserve transparency when they place their trust in childcare providers. I urge you to support Harvey's Law so that stronger protections and accountability measures can help prevent future tragedies. Passing this legislation would honor Harvey's memory while helping safeguard countless other children.

Thank you for your time and for your commitment to the safety and wellbeing of children and families.

Sincerely,

Victoria Cannon

Written Testimony for HF XXXX (West): Harvey's Law

I am writing as a small childcare center owner, who is very concerned by the efforts once again to get legislation passed to mandate video cameras in all infant/ toddler classrooms in childcare centers. Although, I understand the concerns around child abuse, I am very disappointed to once again have to explain the huge impact this piece of legislation would have on childcare centers. It is frustrating and unfair to have legislation being talked about, that would only impact childcare centers, as if abuse only happens in these settings. I also don't understand how requiring cameras, does anything to actually try to prevent child abuse from happening which is where the focus and attention should be. Childcare centers are already facing increased financial stress and the costs associated with installing cameras, maintenance, saving data and wifi connections causes me great concern about our ability as a small center to continue to function. We are in a setting with sporadic internet service, what are the repercussions to us, if our service goes down? Toddlers in our building, do not remain in one room for the entire day. Where does the surveillance stop? Now we are talking about multiple areas that need cameras. I really do not think this is the answer and it feels like this will be just the beginning of more and more surveillance being required. Child abuse is something all centers take seriously, let's take action that actually does something to prevent it from happening.

Shannon OConnor

Licensed Childcare Owner

Written Testimony for HF XXXX (West): Harvey's Law

Dear Committee Members-

I am an early childhood educator in the St Louis park area. I have been in the field for 25 years in many settings: private Nanny, nursery school, childcare center and currently in an on site employer based care setting. This amendment is an invasion of privacy, and overstepping. It becomes close to a police state. I am concerned who will have access to the film footage and security, what it filmed. The footage could be hacked and stolen.

The implementation of this would be cost prohibitive to small programs on both camera maintenance, fees for storage and staff to maintain it.. Also having this gives a false sense of security that could lead to other in person means of monitoring like peers & director supervision.

It is horrible that the people working with children mistreated them in these abusive ways, but filming every movement is not what prevents these situations. What will help is education of childcare providers, paying a living wage, supporting them with needed health care and removing some of the stress that comes from these compounding factors. We need screening to filter out those who are not fit to care for children. That is prevention, not filming and spending money on equipment and video storage.

Thank you for Voting against mandating cameras in early childhood programs!

Heidi Wolf

Little Knights Early Childhood Program

Teacher, Program Director