



LuAnn & Herman Allen | Virginia



LuAnn and Herman's story

On October 22, 2014, LuAnn and Herman Allen's 1-year-old grandson, Joseph Matthew Allen, died while in the care of an unlicensed family home provider. A fire broke out inside the house after the provider placed hot fire pit ashes in a bag in her garage. The provider repeatedly told fire and rescue personnel and neighbors that she had all seven children in her care safely out of the house. However, she was wrong; she was caring for eight children that day. Joseph was found 45 minutes later, strapped into an upside-down infant car seat carrier, which was not his, in a second-floor bedroom where the provider had left him unattended. He died from acute thermal inhalation. The Allens later learned the provider not only lied about the number of children she kept, she also lacked proper safety equipment - working smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, or emergency evacuation plans. More basically, the provider didn't have a list of the children in her care.

At the time of Joseph's death, the Commonwealth's Attorney insisted Virginia law was not sufficient to charge the provider with criminal negligence. That's when the Allen family joined the fight to overhaul Virginia's child care laws, which had not been updated in 25 years. Together, they have advocated for stricter penalties when a child dies or is seriously injured in an illegal, unlicensed setting. They were present to see "Joseph's Law" pass unanimously through the 2016 General Assembly, as well as at the Governor's signing of the bill into law.

Child Care Stats in VA
The cost of center care for 2 children in Virginia is nearly twice the annual cost of college at a four year college.

U.S. businesses lose approximately \$4.4 billion annually due to employee absenteeism as the result of child care breakdowns.

There are 393,407 children under the age of 6 in Virginia who could be in need of child care.

Congressional Request: 2017

CCAAoA is requesting a \$1.4 billion increase (over the FY 2016 level) for next year to ensure that nearly 217,000 children and families don't lose access to care, and also to help states meet the requirements of the 2014 CCDBG law.

We ask that you co-sponsor the "Family and Medical Insurance Leave (FAMILY) Act of 2017" (H.R. 947/S.337), which would:

- Provide up to 12 weeks of leave for working families
- Enable workers to earn up to 66% of their monthly income while on leave
- Cover workers in all companies, no matter size
- Be administered through the newly created Office of Paid Family and Medical Leave

We also ask that you co-sponsor the "Promoting Affordable Childcare for Everyone (PACE) Act of 2017," which would expand and enhance the Child and Dependent Care Tax Credit (CDCTC) to reflect the realities of modern-day child care costs. The PACE Act would make CDCTC refundable and increase the credit rate, which would greatly benefit millions of working families struggling to pay their monthly bills as child care is the greatest expense after housing.