

Kansas Department of

Social and Rehabilitation Services

Don Jordan, Secretary

House Social Services Budget Committee

March 13, 2007

HB 2546 - Foster Child Educational Assistance Act

ISD/CFS

Candy Shively, Deputy Secretary

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Chairman Bethell and members of the Committee, I am Candy Shively, Deputy Secretary of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS). I thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today in support of HB 2546.

Since the Foster Child Educational Assistance Act went into effect on July 1, 2006, 89 students are known to have enrolled for the Fall 06 semester. Their tuition was waived by 27 educational institutions. Only students enrolled in a Kansas educational institution on or after July 1, 2006 are eligible. Students receiving assistance on or before June 30, 2006, remain eligible under the previous program. For these students, the tuition is not waived but paid from federal Education and Training Voucher (ETV) funds.

ETV funds may be used to supplement the waiver of tuition by the school by paying for room and board, technical equipment, course required fees, books, and other post secondary education related costs. From July 1 through November 30th, 2006, \$178,732 of additional assistance from ETV paid by the Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services.

Young people benefitting from tuition waiver and ETV are primarily youth who have aged out of care without the family or connections to assist them in their efforts to continue in school. These young people are intent upon becoming teachers, social workers, lawyers. These young adults have often had a rough start in life but are excited about the opportunity provided by this program and committed to giving back.

Extending the Act beyond the June 30, 2008 sunset would facilitate educational planning for students and continue this valuable support for youth.

SB 355 is the companion bill and is currently in House Appropriations. As amended, it waives course required fees as well as tuition. We support SB 355 as amended.

I'm happy to answer any questions.