

DCF LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY



February 13, 2023

TESTIMONY OF
Kansas Department for Children and Families

TESTIMONY ON
House Bill 2189

Chair
Representative Concannon

Vice Chair
Representative Johnson

Ranking Minority
Representative Ousley

and
Members of the Committee

SUMMARY OF ISSUE & DCF POSITION

Chair Concannon and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 2189. This bill creates a provision that allows a young person reentry into care. By offering young adults experiencing significant life challenges the opportunity to receive reentry services and supports we are creating environments for them to finish up their high school education, obtain necessary employment skills and seek out advanced training and higher education while being provided needed stability. Stability during turbulent times fosters an environment where young people can further develop their self-sufficiency skills and strengthens their ability to become productive healthy citizens.

CONTEXT & HISTORY:

The Consolidated Appropriations Act signed into law on December 27, 2020 mandated states allow eligible young people reentry into care upon request. The DCF Independent Living Program, without statutory provisions for reentry, created a deliverable service as a part of the Independent Living Program to ensure compliance with this Federal law. This service was offered to eligible young people starting on April 23, 2021 through September 30, 2021 when the Federal law for reentry ended. Interested young adults were able to request reentry services without any court involvement through contact with Independent Living Coordinators. The ability to request services from a trusted staff member created a non-intrusive pathway for services while legally maintaining their independence. During this timeframe, 69 young adults across the state of Kansas requested reentry services. The volume requesting this service was higher than the number served in states comparable to Kansas and is attributed in part to the process developed in Kansas for requesting services. The Consolidated Appropriations Act reentry law and federal funding to support reentry services ended on September 30, 2021.

During the above referenced timeframe, the Independent Living Program observed many young people achieve stability, experience success with obtaining their GED, complete missing secondary education credits, pursue post-secondary education, address substance usage disorders and seek out needed mental health treatment. Independent Living Coordinators shared that many of the young people receiving reentry services would have experienced homelessness had it not been for the Consolidated Appropriations Act provisions and funding.

In Kansas during State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2022, 458 young adults transitioned out of foster care into adulthood.

The National Youth in Transition Database (NYTD) mandates states survey youth at ages 17, 19 and 21 as a national effort to collect data on how young people exiting foster care into adulthood are faring. The NYTD Kansas Data Snapshot of young people surveyed at age 19 in 2019 indicated 28.77% self-reported having experienced homelessness. This same cohort of young people later surveyed at age 21 in 2021 indicated 41.75% self-reported experiencing homelessness. This same cohort at age 19 indicated usage of public assistance at 15.07% and then later at age 21 indicated usage of public assistance at 23.30%.

According to the Juvenile Law Center there are 38 states including the District of Columbia that have state statutory provisions allowing for reentry into foster care. Many neighboring states allow for reentry, including Missouri, Nebraska, Iowa and Arkansas.

FISCAL IMPACT OF LEGISLATION:

There are approximately 2,843 non-minor dependents ages 18 to less than 21 years of age who meet qualifications set forth in HB 2189 to request re-entry into custody of DCF. DCF assumes that 10% of eligible young adults would request reentry services. The assumed costs are as follows:

	FY22	FY23
Est. # Re-Entry's	284	284
Additional Case Mgrs. (@30 Cases per Month)	9	9
Additional Supervisors	6	6
Additional Administrator	1	1
Total Additional Staff	16	16
Salary + Fringe and OOE	\$1,234,555	\$1,234,901
Non-Minor Dependent Placement Cost		
<i>Avg 1,800 monthly Annualized</i>	\$6,140,880	\$6,140,880
Contract for Case Management System		
<i>License Fees 800 per yr. for 40 staff</i>	\$32,000	\$32,000
IT Adaption Estimate		
<i>\$100 per hour for 500-hour project</i>	\$50,000	
Estimated Cost	\$7,457,435	\$7,407,781

If HB 2189 is intended to implement the federally recognized extended foster program, expenditures would increase in the IL program. This change would extend IL ages served from age 14 up to 21, to age 23, which would increase caseloads. The fiscal effect on expenditures of this change has not been determined. Federal Title IV-E Foster Care funds would not be available for this program until it was part of the Kansas IV-E State Plan. If Kansas amended the State Plan to show that Kansas has an “extended foster care” program, federal funds of less than 10.0 percent may be available if approved.

DCF POSITION

HB 2189 would create statutory provisions for reentry services for Kansas’s most vulnerable youth. This bill is an important part of better serving vulnerable older youth that transition to adulthood without the vital supports needed for success.