



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL
AND REHABILITATION SERVICES

Don Jordan, Secretary

Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee
February 4, 2009

Social Worker Safety Training

For Additional Information Contact:
Patrick Woods, Director of Governmental Affairs
Docking State Office Building, 6th Floor North
(785) 296-3271



Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

February 4, 2009

Chairman Barnett and members of the committee, I am Don Jordan, Secretary of the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services. Thank you for the opportunity to appear in support of Senate Bill 31.

Our mission is to protect children and promote adult self sufficiency. This requires that staff get out of the office and conduct their business in the community and private homes. Investigating an allegation of adult or child abuse requires close personal contact with individuals who might not welcome our visit. In-home visits may feel intrusive and our staff don't always know ahead of time which homes pose the greatest risks. We have been proactive in providing training for SRS staff in keeping themselves safe and in handling the secondary trauma of protective services work.

Other agencies also have staff at risk. Staff for the child welfare providers under contract with SRS to preserve or reintegrate families must visit in the family home. Community mental health centers have long responded to the need to meet the client in their own home. The limited safeguards available for offices simply aren't available in consumer's homes. Staff must learn to take care of themselves.

SB 31 would require that workers receive six hours of safety training prior to the first renewal of their social work license and offers an opportunity to address the very real problem of worker safety. Thank you again for the opportunity to express my support and I stand for questions.