

DCF LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY



02/09/2023

TESTIMONY OF

Deputy Secretary Tanya Keys

Kansas Department for Children and Families

TESTIMONY ON

HB 2179

Chair

Representative Averkamp

Vice Chair

Representative Howell

Ranking Member

Representative Meyer

and

Members of the Committee

SUMMARY OF ISSUE & DCF POSITION

Chairperson Averkamp and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 2179. The agency requested introduction of this bill in response to a letter of Preliminary Notice of Possible Non-Compliance from the Administration for Children & Families, and to avoid a penalty resulting in the loss of federal funds.

Under current state law, families are disqualified from receiving Child Care Assistance benefits for progressive periods of time if they fail to cooperate with Child Support Services. However, under federal law, the agency must provide 12 full months of continuous eligibility following the determination/issuance of Child Care Assistance benefits. The disruption of benefits if an individual is found non-cooperative with Child Support is in violation of this requirement.

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Under current state law, families are disqualified from receiving Child Care Assistance benefits for progressive periods of time if they fail to cooperate with Child Support Services. However, under federal law, the agency must provide 12 full months of continuous eligibility following the determination/issuance of Child Care Assistance benefits. The disruption of benefits if an individual is found non-cooperative with Child Support is in violation of this requirement.

HB 2179 eliminates the requirement that families receiving Child Care Assistance benefits cooperate with Child Support Services. This change brings the agency back into compliance with federal statute regarding Child Care and Development Funds and the federal 12-month continuous eligibility requirement for childcare. Making this change will allow the state to avoid a 4% penalty.

However, it should be noted that if any of these families receive TANF or food assistance, existing requirements to cooperate with child support and related sanctions continue to apply.

FISCAL IMPACT

DCF estimates a one-time cost of \$500,000 to modify the Kansas Economic and Employment Services (KEES) eligibility system. Federal funds from the Child Care Development Fund are available to fully cover the additional expenses based on the current federal award amounts.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on this bill.