

Kansas Department of

Social and Rehabilitation Services

Gary J. Daniels, Secretary

House Social Service Budget Committee

March 8, 2006

**HB 2730 - Kansas Foster Child Educational
Assistance Act**

Integrated Service Delivery

Gary J. Daniels, Secretary

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Representative Landwehr and members of the committee, I am Gary Daniels, Secretary of SRS. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss HB 2730 the Foster Child Educational Assistance Act.

K.S.A. 74-32,161 established the Foster Care Tuition Waiver and a process for supporting post secondary education of former foster children. It will sunset June 30, 2006 although students who are enrolled prior to June 30th will continue to benefit.

This statute did not actually waive the tuition of eligible applicants but specifically identified Chafee Independent Living funds to pay 80 percent of the tuition and fees and the Board of Regents (KBOR) to provide the 20 percent state match. Changes in federal law made the use of Chafee funds unallowable for students who enroll after July 1, 2005.

The federal Education and Training Voucher (ETV) program does provide funds for secondary education, but these funds could also be used for the "other" costs associated with higher education like room/board, childcare, technical equipment, special fees and books. Each student is limited to a maximum of \$6,250 per year. The recently released 2007 President's budget, includes a 23 percent reduction to the ETV program, so availability of these funds is also in question.

If HB 2730 is enacted as amended (see attached balloon), funding would need to be available in the Board of Regent's budget to cover the cost of this program for students who enroll after July, 1, 2006. Phasing in the program by continuing to support current students under the provisions of K.S.A. 74-32,161, will diminish the immediate cost for KBOR.

Between FY 2003 and FY 2005, 121 youth participated in the program at a total cost of \$227,644. As students graduate and new students enroll to begin their post secondary education, the number of students is expected to increase. A projection of 94 new enrollees for the true waiver program would result in a FY 2007 cost to KBOR of \$179,771. SRS would provide FY 2007 funding of \$105,050 for the 55 students who will continue under the current program.

Adoption of the Kansas Foster Child Educational Assistance Act would provide the flexibility needed to meet changing federal financial participation requirements and retain the benefits of the current program. I respectfully request passage of the Kansas Foster Child Educational Assistance Act and am ready to stand for questions.