

Kansas Department of

Social and Rehabilitation Services

Gary Daniels, Secretary

House Judiciary Committee

February 7, 2006

**HB 2760 - Development of a Sex Offender Policy
Board**

Health Care Policy

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Chair O'Neal and Committee Members, I am Leslie Huss, Forensic Program Consultant with the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS). SRS has a compelling interest in the safe and effective management of the broad array of issues related to sexual offenders, and supports the development of a sex offender policy board as specified in House Bill 2760.

Over the past three fiscal years, SRS' child protection system has investigated 8,062 of them and substantiated 2,542 cases of child sexual abuse. A comprehensive response – from prevention and early intervention, to victim recovery and offender accountability – is essential in meeting the needs of these youth and their families. In addition, SRS manages Kansas' pioneering Sexual Predator Treatment Program which safely contains and treats 137 sexually violent predators. As the census and costs associated with that program continue to rise, new treatment, release and societal challenges rise and must be soundly addressed.

In order to build comprehensive strategies that utilize and strengthen existing expertise and resources that can be effectively implemented in Kansas, and are durable across service settings and over time, it is important to actively link agencies and people to develop, implement, assess and update the strategies together. The existing Kansas Criminal Justice Coordinating Council is a good spring-board body, because it broadly represents law enforcement and correctional entities; while social service, community, victim oriented, education and other interested people can be added to round out the partnership. The addition of the proposed sex offender policy board is a powerful way to evaluate, assess, guide and inform public policy related to public safety in sex offender management.

Building upon the work of existing programs and services, this policy board can lead Kansas' policy makers and provide research-based proposals which

- ▶ facilitate a coordinated response to the multi-agency, multi-system management of sex offender issues, including comprehensive oversight strategies that
 - are across the life span and the complete continuum of care
 - are behavior focused whether adjudicated or convicted
 - include all sex offense adjudications/convictions
 - address issues of education, prevention, early intervention, treatment, security, supervision, and containment
- ▶ build into the response, at every level, the values of public safety, societal expectations, victim protection/recovery, and offender accountability
- ▶ develop and approve practice guidelines, monitoring standards, evaluation tools, risk assessments and related instruments to inform and improve sex offender management
- ▶ recommend statutory, service, program, funding and related mechanisms to successfully implement comprehensive, safe and effective sex offender management strategies.

There are few issues across the social landscape in America today that spark as much universal concern and desire for action as those related to sex offender behavior, victimization and public safety management. Clearly these are issues that require compressed but thoughtful attention and response. Developing responses in a cohesive fashion, based upon shared values of public safety, evidence-based successful strategies, victim recovery and offender accountability will produce the strongest public policies. Still, the responses must be agile, prompt, proactive, continuously evaluated for effectiveness, and sensitive to overall societal expectations. The sex offender policy board proposed in this bill will support strong and effective public policy responses to these troubling issues.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony. I will stand for any questions.