



Strong Families Make a Strong Kansas

House Appropriations

February 20, 2014

Testimony on:

HB 2330

Presented by:

Kathe Decker

Deputy Secretary of Family Services

Kansas Department for Children and Families

Testimony of:

Kathe Decker, Deputy Secretary of Family Services
Kansas Department for Children and Families
Topeka, Kansas

Testimony on:

HB 2330 – Relating to Marriage Licenses

Chairman Rhoades, Vice-Chair Suellentrop, Ranking Member Henry, and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony as a proponent on HB 2330.

DCF firmly believes strong family, makes a strong Kansas. In an effort to build strong families, we believe and incentivizing marriage is towards that goal.

On November 19, 2012 Governor Sam Brownback created the Governor's Task Force on Reducing Childhood Poverty. DCF' represented the department by serving as chair on the taskforce. Over the course of several meetings, the task force heard from a wide range of experts on various topics related to childhood poverty. Some of the research presented demonstrated the importance of marriage and breaking the cycle of poverty. The taskforce then developed recommendations that focus on the three universally – recognized pathways out of poverty – education, employment, and family composition.

One of the recommendations the task force developed was to increase pre-marital education by reducing the marriage license fee for those who complete eight hours of pre-marital education.

Research has demonstrated that promoting marriage ensures several societal benefits, including the reduction in childhood poverty, reduction of high school dropout, reduction in crime, reduction in teen pregnancies and out – of – wedlock birth rates, and increase graduation rates.

I am happy to stand for questions.