

# DCF LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY



*March 6, 2023*

**TESTIMONY OF**

Stacy Tidwell, Deputy Director of Youth Programs  
Kansas Department for Children and Families

**TESTIMONY ON**

HB 2247 Foster Youth Checking and Saving Accounts

**Chair**

Representative Hoheisel

**Vice Chair**

Representative Clifford

**Ranking Minority**

Representative Xu

**and**

**Members of the Committee**

## SUMMARY OF ISSUE & DCF POSITION

Chair Hoheisel and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 2247 Foster Youth Checking and Savings Accounts.

The bill creates the statutory framework to allow youth, aged 16 or older and placed in the custody of the Secretary of the Department for Children and Families (DCF), or a federally recognized Indian tribe in this state, or the Secretary of Corrections to open a checking or savings account without a co-signer. .

DCF believes it is important that youth placed in the custody of the child welfare or juvenile justice systems have the opportunity to participate in activities like that of their non-system involved peers. Opening a checking or savings account is a part of successful preparation for adulthood. It is vital Kansas youth in care be given opportunities to gain employment, earn income, learn how to budget and manage their own finances. These are all important steps in the process of learning how to become a contributing member of society.

The Preventing Sex Trafficking and Strengthening Families Act (P.L. 113-183) includes reasonable and prudent parenting standards for youth placed in foster care. This standard of reasonable and prudent parenting means a youth in care should be provided opportunities like that of their non-system involved peers. For example, a youth may want to participate in afterschool activities, learn how to drive, attend school sports events, play in a sport, join clubs of interest, have a sleepover with a friend, gain employment and start a checking or savings account. These normal activities have been shown to help buffer the effects of childhood trauma and help youth develop better coping skills.

Providing a statutory pathway that allows system-involved youth to open checking and savings accounts without co-signers also helps mitigate fraud and potential theft of a young person's money by biological or non-related caregivers.

The Department for Children and Families indicates that HB 2247 would have minimal fiscal impact as there may be costs associated with creating awareness, printing, posting and potential training.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 2247. DCF supports this legislation and asks that it be passed favorably.