



House Corrections and Juvenile Justice

January 28, 2020

HB 2445

Written by:

Tanya Keys

Deputy Secretary

Kansas Department for Children and Families

Ethan Belshe, Legislative Liaison
DCF Administration Building, 6th Floor
(785) 296-8378 ethan.belshe@ks.gov
www.dcf.ks.gov

Testimony of:

Tanya Keys
Deputy Secretary
Kansas Department for Children and Families

Chair Jennings, Vice-Chair Delperdang, and Ranking Member Highberger, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony to the committee regarding HB 2445. DCF is in opposition to this bill.

As the Committee reviews this proposal, please remember that youth who have run from their foster care placements are already experiencing toxic or traumatic levels of stress and could be struggling with mental or behavioral health issues. Placement in a detention center may amplify this level of stress or behavioral health crisis.

Our agency also shares the concern articulated by the Kansas Department of Corrections that federal funding would likely be placed at risk if Kansas were to return to the practice of detaining children who have run from foster care in juvenile detention centers.

We are committed to reducing the number of children who run from their foster placements, and we recognize the solution is not placement in a juvenile detention facility. Our work is centered on finding the best and least restrictive placement and supports for these children; in many cases, that placement is in the home of a supportive relative or family foster home with access to treatment services. DCF will continue to pursue alternatives to juvenile detention that are in the best interest of Kansas children.

Again, I thank you for the opportunity to provide input on HB 2445 and am happy to answer questions or provide additional information if needed.