



Strong Families Make a Strong Kansas

House Corrections and Juvenile Justice

February 19, 2014

Testimony on:

HB 2588

Presented by:

Brian Dempsey

Director of Prevention and Protection Services

Kansas Department for Children and Families

Testimony of:

Brian Dempsey, Director of Prevention and Protection Services
Kansas Department for Children and Families
Topeka, Kansas

Testimony on:

HB 2588, Children and Minors, relating to the revised KS juvenile justice code;
revised Kanas code for children in care

Chairman Rubin, Vice-Chair Gonzalez, Ranking Member Pauls and Members of the Committee:

I am Brian Dempsey, Executive Director of Prevention & Protection Services, Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF).

HB 2588 allows a prosecutor to depart from the adjudication and placement processes in the Juvenile Justice code for cases involving low-risk juvenile offenders who committed misdemeanors. Further, if the court believes a juvenile offender to be a child in need of care, it may place the juvenile offender in the temporary custody of the Secretary of DCF and order a Child in Need of Care petition be filed. HB 2588 also removes the Secretary of DCF as a potential permanent custodian.

If a juvenile offender is before the court for an offense but the need is for child welfare services, DCF supports the court initiating the Child in Need of Care process to allow DCF the opportunity to assess the family for appropriate services. DCF will work with the family in order to ensure the child safely may remain home.

DCF supports the removal of the Secretary as a permanent custodian option. DCF strives to achieve permanency for each child in the Secretary's custody, preferably with safe reintegration into the child's home. Permanent custodian is a permanency option as well. However, the state should not serve as the permanent option for the child. If the Secretary retains custody, DCF continues seeking a permanent family or permanent connection for the child.