



House Corrections & Juvenile Justice Committee

January 27, 2016

Testimony on:

HB 2451

Testimony By:

Kathy L. Armstrong

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Kansas Department for Children and Families

Testimony of:

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Kansas Department for Children and Families
Topeka, Kansas

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HB 2451

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2451.

HB 2451 amends K.S.A. 38-2223 by adding “animal control officers,” as defined by the proposed bill as mandatory reporters of suspected abuse or neglect or sexual abuse of children.

Per existing statute, reports required by mandated reporters are to be made to the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF). The reports are made to the DCF Kansas Protection Report Center (KPRC). There are two KPRC offices, one in Topeka (available 24 hours per day, seven days per week) and one in Wichita (open during regular business hours). Reports may be made orally, in writing or online.

K.S.A. 38-2223 (2) provides “In addition to the reports required under subsection (a)(1), any person who has reason to suspect that a child may be a child in need of care may report” suspected abuse or neglect. There may have been situations historically when an animal control officer did report suspected abuse or neglect as they visited the home to take custody of an animal or investigate cruelty to an animal or animals. This amendment would make such reporting mandatory if and when such animal control officers observe situations that give rise to suspicion of abuse or neglect of children. Additionally, cruelty to animals is sometimes a precursor or can accompany the abuse or neglect of persons in the home.

It is further proposed that a balloon amendment be adopted to add the language in this bill amending K.S.A. 38-2223 (F) be added to mandatory reporter statutes relating to the reporting of abuse or neglect or exploitation of vulnerable adults.

K.S.A. 39-1431 is the statute that establishes persons who are mandated to report when any person has “reasonable cause to suspect or believe a vulnerable adult is being or has been harmed as a result of physical, mental or emotional abuse or neglect or sexual abuse.” DCF would support a balloon amendment adding “animal control officers” as mandated reporters in K.S.A. 39-1431.

DCF supports this bill and recommends consideration of the suggested balloon amendment.

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony before this Committee.