



DCF Legislative Testimony

February 27, 2025

WRITTEN ONLY, PROPONENT

TESTIMONY OF: Secretary Laura Howard, Department for Children and Families

TESTIMONY ON: HB 2237 - Authorizing hiring, recruitment and retention bonuses in state agencies' employee award and recognition program, increasing the limitation on such award or bonus to \$10,000, eliminating the secretary of administration's authority to adopt rules and regulations and requiring such secretary to submit an annual report to certain legislative committees concerning such awards and bonuses.

DCF | HB2237 | STATE HIRING, RECRUITMENT, RETENTION BONUSES

Chair Waymaster and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 2237. The bill would amend the Employee Award and Recognition program to allow state agencies to request and implement hiring, recruitment, and retention bonuses up to \$10,000 with Governor's approval. Additionally, state agencies who award bonuses or awards would be required to submit a report to the Secretary of Administration for the previous fiscal year on August 1.

The Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF) currently faces hiring and retention challenges due to several factors in the competitive job market, including the inability to offer sign-on or recruitment bonuses to match our private counterparts. The agency has implemented recruitment measures including hiring events across the state, front line worker bonuses, and working with the legislature to bring our prevention and protection workers closer to market rates in FY 25.

However, many of the DCF client facing positions, such as Human Services Assistants, Social Work Specialists and Child Protection Specialists have vacancy rates over 30%. This has led to retention challenges in turnover as caseload increase. For example, the agency currently has a nearly 18.67% turnover rate in our Economic and Employment Services division. These are the employees that work directly with clients to determine benefit eligibility for Food Assistance, Child Care Assistance, Low Income Energy Assistance (LIEAP), and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The bill would allow the agency an opportunity to show employee appreciation and potentially decrease turnover by allowing retention bonuses to those employees who stay with the agency.

The Kansas Department for Children and Families would ask the committee to vote favorably on House Bill 2237.