



# DCF Legislative Testimony

February 4, 2025

**TESTIMONY OF:** Tanya Keys, Deputy Secretary, Department for Children and Families

**TESTIMONY ON:** HB 2589 Prohibiting the secretary for children and families from accepting anonymous reports of child abuse or neglect, etc.

## DCF | HB 2589 | ANONYMOUS REPORTING

Chair Howerton and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on HB2589 and request consideration of one possible amendment. Requirements in this bill have positive impact, specifically concentrated in:

- Improved information about child and family safety through ability to contact reporters for more information after the initial call to the agency.
- Amplified focus on confidential reporting and thorough information gathering from those contacting the agency.
- Reduction in calls that are spurious or not based on legitimate concerns of child abuse or neglect or a need for assessment/ service.

## Background on Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting Procedures

Reports of suspected child abuse or neglect are made to the Kansas Protection Report Center (KPRC) via the toll-free number 1-800-922-5330, fax, mail, or web intake. The KPRC receives reports of alleged abuse, neglect, or family in need of assessment 7 days a week, 24 hours a day.

There may be seasonal differences, but generally, about 65% of reports of suspected child abuse and neglect are through online reporting, 30% through calls to the toll-free line and 5% via facsimile [Figure 1.]

Of the 70,940 reports (calls) received in SFY 2024 (most recent year available for contact method), 53,899 were received through the online web reporting system. Of the 70,940 SFY 24 reports of suspected child abuse or neglect, 6% (n=4,273) were from an anonymous reporter (Table 1.)

In SFY 25:

- Of the 70,169 reports of suspected child abuse or neglect, 6% (n=4,138) were from an anonymous reporter (Tables 1 and 3.)
- There were 33,546 reports assigned for further investigation and assessment and of those assigned 6.65% (n=2,230) were from an anonymous reporter (Table 2.)
- 53% of all reports of suspected child abuse or neglect from an anonymous reporter were assigned.
  - For reports not assigned, more than one half (57%) were not assigned because the presenting information did not meet statutory definitions of child abuse, neglect or indicate a family in need of assessment for service. (Table 4.)

In Kansas, mandated reporters are required to report child abuse or neglect under the Kansas reporting law K.S.A. 38-2223, *Reporting of certain abuse or neglect of children; persons required to report; reports, made to whom; penalties; immunity from liability*. Mandated reporters defined in (K.S.A. 38-2223)(a)(A-F) with reason to suspect that a child has been harmed as a result of physical, mental or emotional abuse or neglect or sexual abuse shall report the matter promptly as provided in subsections (b) and (c).

For those who are not a mandated reporter, reporting as an anonymous report source is currently accepted. However, many (non-mandated) reporters do leave their contact information and do not report anonymously.

DCF maintains general information for mandated and any reporters of child abuse and neglect through our public website [Mandated Reporter Portal - Prevention and Protection Services](#) . Mandated reporters may report their concern using methods of telephone, fax or a web-based online reporting system, which is through a portal available 24/7 at [Mandated Reporter Online Report - Prevention and Protection Services](#). The general information webpage includes information and the form to report [unexcused school absences](#) if the designated educational/ school contact needs to attach that form to their online report.

The Department for Children and Families contracts with Kansas Children's Service League (KCSL) to provide mandated and other reporter training across the state through federal funds, including those from the Child Abuse Prevention Treatment Act (CAPTA) allocation to all states. KCSL is the Prevent Child Abuse America chapter in Kansas and continues to stay current on trends and research nationwide. KCSL also provides a parent support line through 1-800-Children. DCF encourages community partners to use the 1-800-children line resource for supporting parents. Information on the helpline phone number is included in a (return) text from DCF for anyone who makes a call about concern for child abuse or neglect.

## Kansas Protection Report Center Policy and Procedure

Gathering information from a reporter of suspected child abuse or neglect or a family's need for assessment of services is a critical step assuring meaningful response to a family for safety and wellbeing. DCF has specific policies regarding receipt of reports, information gathered at intake, and confidentiality for reporters in the [Policy and Procedure Manual](#) Section 1000 complimented by Appendix 1A focused on [Kansas Intake Guidance](#).

Typically, anonymous reporters contact the agency by phone or postal mail correspondence. Regarding form of a report, when a caller reaches KPRC by telephone we inquire about the reporter's name, phone number, residential address, email address, and employer. The relationship of the reporter contacting the agency is also recorded at time of intake. KPRC team members emphasize to callers that more information is helpful to field staff and provides the agency with the opportunity to follow up with any clarifying questions to assure safety and wellbeing of the child and family. In addition, our website includes a reference resource ([Tips for Making Reports of Abuse of Neglect.pdf](#)) for reporters. Conversation notes for KPRC team members convey that lack of information from a report may delay a response in assessing safety and wellbeing of children, and information about the confidentiality of reporter information in a child in need of care report is emphasized in training and desk guide materials related to 38-2212 (c ) necessary access which sets forth that information authorized to be disclosed pursuant to this subsection shall not contain information that identifies a reporter of a child who is alleged or adjudicated to be a child in need of care.

When a person attempts to report child abuse or neglect anonymously, KPRC currently provides information on the importance of thorough reporter contact information and confidentiality for their identity. In addition, our team members share information on alternative ways to address concerns or seek community parenting support for families when there are no concerns of abuse or neglect, such as [1-800-CHILDREN through the Kansas Children's Service League, Inc.](#) Further, information on the helpline phone number is included in a (return) text from DCF for anyone who makes a call about concern for child abuse or neglect.

## **BILL POSITION AND FISCAL IMPACT**

DCF has a concern that the bill does not appear to address a circumstance where DCF is told of imminent harm for a child. Under the bill's current language, it is not clear whether DCF would have the ability to share or transmit that information from the caller/anonymous reporter to law enforcement. We would kindly request the committee consider an amendment that provides an exception so that DCF may share information with law enforcement when the report describes or indicates action is necessary to protect the child.

Regarding other attributes of the bill, DCF would update policy and intake guidance documents with all proposed requirements that become effective and conduct training and awareness sessions for staff on those changes. In addition, DCF would update public education awareness programs and related materials on the reporting of suspected abuse or neglect per K.S.A 38-2222.

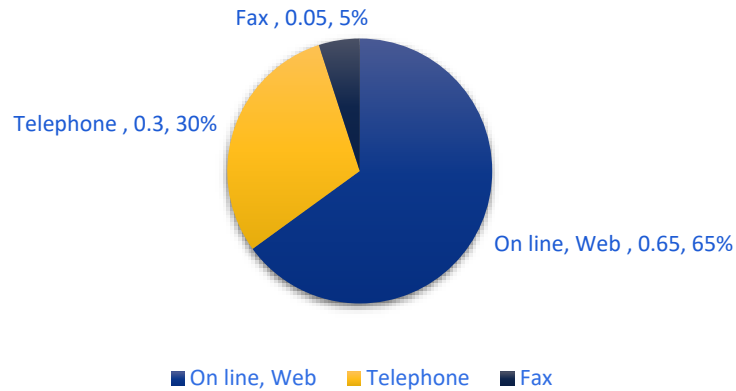
For example, there is not currently policy or guidance in place to inform reporters of the [new section (e)] consequences of false reporting lacking a factual foundation is a class B misdemeanor. Similarly, there is no current policy to inform an anonymous reporter that the secretary is prohibited from accepting a report unless such person provides their name, telephone number and residential address.

KPRC staff strive to engage reporters to leave their contact information so that the agency can support the child's safety and family's wellbeing swiftly and effectively. This bill is an opportunity to reinforce the agency's commitment to confidentiality for reporters and gather critical information necessary to help the agency conduct initial assessments, make decisions regarding assignment, and coordinate with collateral contacts and a family's support network. Further, the bill reinforces informing reporters of alternative ways to support families to address concerns.

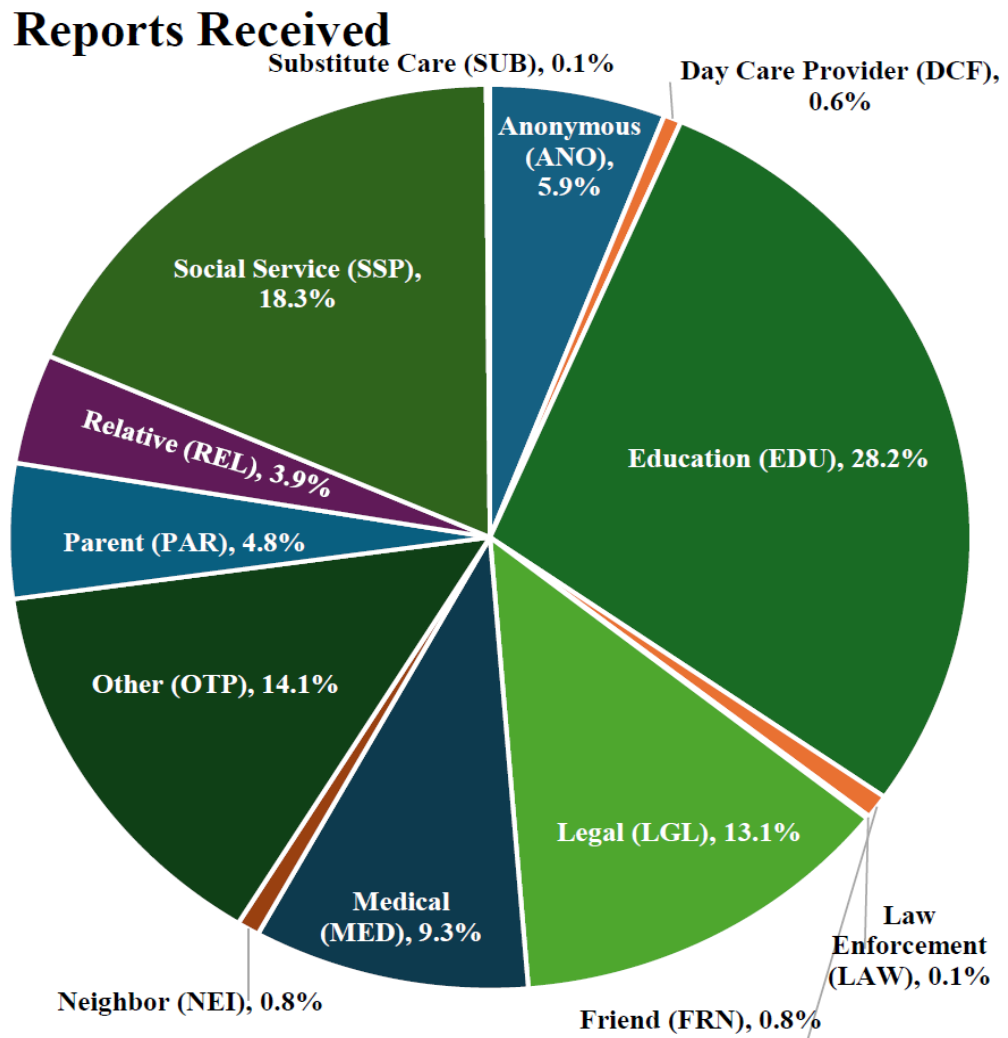
There is no fiscal impact to DCF with this bill, and we would ask the committee to consider an amendment regarding contact with law enforcement when action is necessary to protect a child before passing it out favorably.

## **Related Data and Management Information**

**Figure 1: Method of Reporting to KPRC**



**Figure 2: SFY 2024 Reports Received by Reporter Source**



<b>Table 1: Reports Received</b>	<b>SFY 2019</b>	<b>SFY 2020</b>	<b>SFY 2021</b>	<b>SFY 2022</b>	<b>SFY 2023</b>	<b>SFY 2024</b>	<b>SFY 2025</b>
# of Anonymous reports received	4,950	4,960	4,543	4,138	4,358	4,273	4,138
Total reports received	73,407	66,525	67,387	70,057	72,587	70,940	70,169
% of reports received from Anonymous reporter	6.74%	7.46%	6.74%	5.91%	6.00%	6.02%	5.90%

<b>Table 2: Reports Assigned</b>	<b>SFY 2019</b>	<b>SFY 2020</b>	<b>SFY 2021</b>	<b>SFY 2022</b>	<b>SFY 2023</b>	<b>SFY 2024</b>	<b>SFY 2025</b>
# of Anonymous reports assigned	3,051	3,063	2,842	2,518	2,605	2,372	2,230
Total reports assigned	45,801	37,940	38,263	38,870	37,776	3,253	33,546
% of reports assigned from Anonymous reporter	6.66%	8.07%	7.43%	6.48%	6.90%	6.73%	6.65%

**Table 3: SFY 2025 Report Source**

<b>Reports Received</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Anonymous (ANO)	4,138	5.9%
Day Care Provider (DCF)	414	0.6%
Education (EDU)	19,815	28.2%
Friend (FRN)	594	0.8%
Law Enforcement (LAW)	71	0.1%
Legal (LGL)	9,160	13.1%
Medical (MED)	6,506	9.3%
Neighbor (NEI)	529	0.8%
Other (OTP)	9,870	14.1%
Parent (PAR)	3,380	4.8%
Relative (REL)	2,758	3.9%
Social Service (SSP)	12,846	18.3%
Substitute Care (SUB)	88	0.1%
Victim (VIC)	135	0.2%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>70,169</b>	<b>100%</b>

<b>Reports Assigned</b>	<b>#</b>	<b>%</b>
Anonymous (ANO)	2,230	6.6%
Day Care Provider (DCF)	207	0.6%
Education (EDU)	10,292	30.7%
Friend (FRN)	357	1.1%
Law Enforcement (LAW)	29	0.1%
Legal (LGL)	3,284	9.8%
Medical (MED)	3,020	9.0%
Neighbor (NEI)	272	0.8%
Other (OTP)	4,497	13.4%
Parent (PAR)	1,668	5.0%
Relative (REL)	1,514	4.5%
Social Service (SSP)	6,141	18.3%
Substitute Care (SUB)	35	0.1%
Victim (VIC)	84	0.3%
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>33,546</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Table 4: SFY 25, Reason the anonymous report was not assigned**

<b>Kansas Protection Report Center Initial Assessment Screening Decision/Reason</b>	<b># of Events</b>	<b>Percentage of ANO Events</b>
<b>Report Not assigned (a.k.a. Screened Out)</b>	<b>1908</b>	<b>46%</b>
Information in the report is Already Assessed or Being Assessed	564	30%
Alleged Incident Took Place in a State Institution	1	0%
Alleged Perpetrator is a DCF Employee	1	0%
Closed After Assessment	173	9%
Family Will Address Concern	25	1%
Fails to Provide Information Necessary to Locate Child	23	1%
No Authority to Proceed and/or has a Conflict of Interest	7	0%
Does Not Meet Statutory Definition of CINC	1,080	57%
Another Agency Will Address Concerns	29	2%
Person Over 18	5	0%
<b>Report Assigned for further assessment or investigation (a.k.a. Screened In)</b>	<b>2230</b>	<b>54%</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>4138</b>	<b>100%</b>