DCF LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY

March 14, 2023

TESTIMONY OF

Kansas Department for Children and Families

TESTIMONY ON

House Bill 2277 Proponent Written Only

Chair

Representative Waymaster

Vice Chair

Representative Hoffman

Ranking Minority

Representative Helgerson

and

Members of the Committee

SUMMARY OF ISSUE

Chairman Waymaster and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony to on House Bill 2277. 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 1st.

CONTEXT & HISTORY

The Department for Children and Families currently faces hiring and retention challenges due 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 23. However, many of the DCF's client facing positions, such as Human Services Assistants, Social Work Specialists and Child Protection Specialists have vacancy rates over 12%. This has led to retention challenges in turnover as caseload increase. For example, the agency currently has a nearly 26% turnover rate in our Economic and Employment Services division. These are the employees that work directly with clients to determine benefit eligibility. 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.

Department for Children and Families would ask the committee to vote favorably on House Bill 2277.