



**Proponent Testimony on HB2299**  
**House Child Welfare and Foster Care Committee**  
**February 8, 2023**

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**Chair Concannon, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Minority Member Ousley, and Members of the Committee:**

My name is Angela Hedrick, LPC, and I serve as Vice President of Operations of the nonprofit KVC Kansas. Our KVC team appreciates the opportunity to be the state's foster care case management provider in two of the eight catchment areas.

KVC Kansas is the state's foster care case management provider for:

- Area 6 (Kansas City & Lawrence areas)
- Area 3 (Topeka and NEK)

We also serve as the state's largest Child Placing Agency, sponsoring 25.5% of Kansas foster homes.

We appreciate the work the legislature, particularly this committee, is devoting to improving the path to permanency through adoption from foster care. Bringing attention to the importance of a child's attachments and the potential impact on a child's wellbeing is of great value in the complex decision-making process towards permanency. Consideration should be given to the length of time a child has lived with a family and the attachment that has formed when making lifelong decisions for a child.

HB2299 provides expectations for the considerations that should be given when a child has lived with a family for a specific amount of time. Maintaining healthy attachments should be a primary consideration in determining what is in the best interests of the child, but it is not the only determining factor in a child's best interests. Considering all relevant factors including attachments, relationships, and cultural connections as they contribute to a child's best interest is paramount. We support HB2299 specifying that healthy attachments must be considered but best interests remain primary.

If right to appeal language is included, we would ask that consideration be given to opportunities for all adoptive resources to appeal non-selection.

We would also suggest consideration for excluding ICPC cases from these proposed changes because the timeline for ICPC cases, even when everything proceeds as

expected, is so lengthy that the current language of HB2299 would exclude relatives, non-related kin and other potential adoptive resources who live out of state, through no fault of their own.

We appreciate the committee's work on this issue and the opportunity to collaborate on language that best captures the needs of our communities.