



Proponent Testimony on HB 2581
House Child Welfare and Foster Care Committee
January 31, 2024

Cornerstones of Care is a behavioral health organization with a 154-year history of providing prevention, treatment and support services to children and their families. The children that we serve have all experienced trauma. Trauma resulting from events, such as abuse or neglect, separation from/loss of a loved one, and witnessing or experiencing violence in their community, as well as trauma stemming from ongoing, cumulative experiences like poverty, addiction, and mental illness.

Cornerstones of Care is in support of HB 2581 and asks that the committee support HB 2581 to improve care and services for children and families in Kansas.

The Department of Health and Human Services issued new Title IV-E child support guidelines in June of 2022. Those guidelines suggest for states to not assess child support payments for most children in foster care and to only assess support payments “in very rare instances where there will be positive or no adverse effects on the child, or the assignment will not impede successful achievement of the child’s permanency plan.” The Department found that requirements of reunification can impose a financial hardship on many families, that the addition of child support payment can cause significant delays in reunification, and that the cost of attempts to collect payments exceeds the amount collected.

Cornerstones of Care believes that HB 2581 could aid in quicker family reunification and could pose less of a financial burden on struggling families, and also save state resources.

- HB 2581 can provide courts with more options to best suit the needs of families by eliminating the requirement for child support assessments.
- HB 2581 could allow families to use limited financial resources to aid in completing reunification tasks.
- HB 2581 could reduce the number of resources used by the Department for Children and Families Child Support Services in filing for, managing, and collecting child support payments.

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