

627 SW Topeka Blvd | Topeka, KS 66603



**Proponent Testimony on HB2581  
House Child Welfare and Foster Care Committee  
January 31, 2024**

Chair Concannon, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Ousley, and Members of the Committee, my name is Rachel Marsh, CEO of the Children's Alliance of Kansas. The Alliance is an association of 19 private, non-profit child welfare agencies that collectively provide a full array of services for children and families in child abuse and neglect prevention, human trafficking prevention, family preservation, foster care, adoption, independent living, and parent, youth, and child skill-building, mental health, and substance use treatment. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB2581.

Currently, when a child enters care, courts generally order the biological parents to pay some amount of monthly child support. In June 2022, the Department of Health and Human Services issued new Title IV-E child support guidelines that suggest states not assess child support payments for most children in foster care. The guidelines indicate the state should 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 guidelines reflect what we see in practice in child welfare in Kansas: requirements on biological parents related to tasks toward reunification can impose a financial hardship on many families, slowing down reunification. The addition of child support payments can further delay reunification.

HB2581 will aid quicker family reunification and pose less of a financial burden on struggling families. HB2581 will provide courts with more options to best suit the needs of families by eliminating the requirement for child support assessments. And, HB2581 will allow families to use limited financial resources to aid in completing reunification tasks.

We ask that you support HB2581. I am happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.

Rachel Marsh  
[rmarsh@childally.org](mailto:rmarsh@childally.org)  
(620) 951 4110

**Members of the Children's Alliance of Kansas:**

CALM, Emporia

Cornerstones of Care, Kansas City

DCCCA, Lawrence

Eckerd Connects, Wichita

EmberHope, Wichita

Florence Crittenton, Topeka

FosterAdopt Connect, Olathe

Gathered, Derby

ICTSOS, Wichita

KidsTLC, Olathe

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O'Connell Children's Shelter, Lawrence

Rainbows United, Wichita

Restoration Family Services, Wichita

Saint Francis Ministries, Salina

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The Villages, Topeka

Wichita Children's Home, Wichita

Zoe's House, Kansas City