



Department of Corrections

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MEMORANDUM

TO: Kansas House Committee on Taxation
Rep. Adam Smith, Chair
Rep. Brian Bergkamp, Vice Chair
Rep. Tom Sawyer, Ranking Minority Member
Distinguished Representative Members

FROM: Timothy B. Phelps, Deputy Director of Administration

DATE: March 18, 2024

RE: **Testimony in Support of HB2773 Section (rrrr), Related to Boys & Girls Club of Topeka**

To Chairman Representative Adam Smith and the members of the House Committee on Taxation, thank you for the honor to spend a few moments of your valuable time testifying in support of the proposed section (rrrr) of HB 2773.

This is the first time in my adult life that I have had the honor of testifying before a Kansas legislative committee, and could very possibly be the only time I have such an opportunity. It is hard for me to identify a matter of greater weight than the solemn work of helping Kansas juveniles be prepared for successful adulthood.

I come from the perspective of a long career in corrections; that place that is considered in many instances to be the end of the road. Support systems have broken down. Those options that most of us grew up taking for granted just are not present. Skill sets that have prepared us to face the challenges of growing up have not been developed – often because there was no competent adult who had both the ability and the interest in helping that development.

In 2019, my career path took me deep into the community of generous souls who do the daily work to help our juveniles. Those organizations that dealt with children in need of care; those organizations that dealt with juvenile offenders; and those organizations that work feverishly to provide strong supporting systems for those juveniles who are at risk of one or both of these systems. This state does not need to keep adding children to the CINC and Juvenile Offender populations. This state needs more options for preventing the crushing weight of these systems on our families.

The Boys & Girls Club of Topeka has found a working formula in the way they engage with our juveniles ... in the way they support the growth and development of our juveniles ... in the way they show our juveniles that they are loved and respected. The Teen Center Work Program has every chance to become the model for how we take juveniles who need structure and help, and turn those into successful adults with functional skills and renewed understanding of their abilities to grow and achieve in their lives.

As a father and grandfather. As a career corrections professional who has seen the heartbreaking reality of unmet need for our community's youth. As an active advocate for those youth in the CINC and Juvenile Offender systems. I am honored to give my full support and recommendation for doing all we can to help Dawn McWilliams and her team of wonderful workers at Boys and Girls Club of Topeka succeed in the development and building of the Teen Center facility.

Thank you again, Chairman Smith and Committee Members, for the honor to provide testimony. I stand ready to answer any questions you may have.