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Proponent Testimony in Support of HB 2329

Placements for Juvenile Offenders

Chair Warren, Vice Chair Titus, Ranking Member Corson, and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony on HB 2329. My name is Angela Hedrick, and I am here today on behalf of KVC Kansas.

KVC Kansas is a private nonprofit organization delivering state-directed child welfare services under contract with the Kansas Department for Children and Families. **For more than 50 years**, we have served Kansas children, teens and families through foster care case management, child placing services, behavioral health care and residential treatment. Our work includes supporting youth with complex needs while maintaining safe, appropriate placements for children who have experienced abuse and neglect.

HB 2329 addresses an important issue within Kansas's juvenile justice and child welfare systems: **ensuring that youth who are adjudicated for serious offenses are placed in settings that are appropriate for their legal status, supervision needs and treatment requirements**, while also protecting the safety and stability of foster care placements.

The State of Kansas has a responsibility to ensure that its child welfare and juvenile justice systems are aligned, clearly defined and equipped to respond appropriately to the differing needs of youth involved in each system. HB 2329 reflects that responsibility by clarifying placement expectations and reinforcing the State's role in ensuring that youth are served in environments designed to meet their legal, safety and treatment needs.

Foster care is designed to provide safe, family-based care for children and teens who have experienced abuse or neglect and is **not intended to serve as a placement setting for youth requiring secure supervision or intensive justice-based intervention**. When youth who have committed serious offenses are placed in foster care settings that are not designed to provide secure supervision or intensive behavioral intervention, it creates unintended consequences for all involved.

Senate Judiciary Committee
January 22, 2026 Attachment #2

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These placements can strain foster families, disrupt existing placements, and undermine the therapeutic environment necessary for children who are in care due to abuse or neglect.

To illustrate the real-world impact of misaligned placements, public reporting in Kansas continues to document situations in which foster families are caring for youth with serious behavioral and supervision needs, **often related to significant justice involvement, without clear placement options when safety concerns escalate**. In one widely reported account, a long-term foster parent described being unable to access a meaningful "cooling-off" period or timely placement change after a youth in their care exhibited violent and sexually inappropriate behavior toward other children in the home. **These situations involve serious offenses and sustained safety risks, not low-level infractions or momentary emotional dysregulation**. Under current law, foster families may have limited authority and few immediate options to ensure safety, leaving caregivers feeling unsafe and questioning whether they can continue fostering. Situations like this demonstrate how unclear placement expectations place strain on foster families and reinforce the need for clearer alignment between the juvenile justice and child welfare systems. HB 2329 helps address this gap by supporting appropriate placement pathways that protect youth, caregivers, and the stability of foster homes.

HB 2329 helps clarify placement expectations and responsibilities by reaffirming the distinct roles of the courts, the Department for Children and Families and juvenile justice agencies in determining appropriate placement settings based on a youth's legal status, supervision needs and treatment requirements. By doing so, **it helps ensure that youth involved in the juvenile justice system are served in settings equipped to meet their supervision and treatment needs**.

From a provider perspective, clarity in placement authority and expectations is essential and supports expansion of services through a more effective use of existing resources, rather than creating new costs. When systems are misaligned, nonprofit providers are placed in **difficult positions** where they are asked to serve youth in settings that do not match the youth's legal or clinical needs. HB 2329 reduces this misalignment and provides clearer guidance for courts, agencies and providers.

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Importantly, this bill does not inappropriately increase accountability for justice-involved youth. Rather, it focuses on ensuring that youth are served in settings aligned with their legal status, level of risk and treatment needs, **while maintaining access to services that support rehabilitation and progress**. By clarifying placement expectations, HB 2329 helps ensure accountability is applied thoughtfully and proportionately; while preserving foster care placements for children whose primary need is safety, stability, and healing from trauma.

In closing, HB 2329 represents a thoughtful and measured approach to strengthening Kansas's juvenile justice and child welfare systems. By aligning placement decisions with the needs of youth and the capacity of the system, this legislation promotes safety, stability and effective service delivery for all children and teens involved.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I respectfully urge the Committee to support HB 2329.

Respectfully,

Angela Hedrick, LPC

Vice President of Operations

KVC Kansas

Sources and References

1. **Kansas Legislature**
   Kansas House Bill 2329 (2025–2026 Session).
2. **Kansas News Service (KCUR)**
   Ujiyediin, Nomin. *A Two-Year-Old Kansas Law That Kept Kids Out of Jail May Have Pushed Them into Foster Care*. 2019.