

The Crisis Center, Inc.

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HB 2781
House Judiciary Committee
February 15, 2024

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

PROPONENT

Dear Chairperson Humphries and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of The Crisis Center, Inc., I am pleased to submit written testimony in **SUPPORT** of HB 2781.

The Crisis Center, Inc. is the accredited advocacy organization serving victims and survivors of domestic violence and sexual assault in Clay, Geary, Marshall, Pottawatomie, and Riley counties, as well as the Fort Riley military installation. The Crisis Center also administers the statewide Kansas Crisis Hotline, a vital resource that provides support, safety planning, and connections to local services for victims across Kansas. All services are free and confidential, and are available 24-hours a day, 365 days a year.

Throughout my career, I have worked collaboratively to advance policies and practices that increase the safety and stability of crime victims in Kansas. I worked extensively on the Kansas Sexual Assault Kit Initiative, and now serve on the Kansas Sexual Assault Response Advisory Committee (K-SARAC), which is a multidisciplinary group of statewide experts who facilitate cross-discipline collaboration and cultivate promising practices that increase victim safety and offender accountability.

HB 2781 will allow the Kansas Crime Victims Compensation Board to award compensation to crime victims who obtain a forensic medical examination within seven days of the crime. **This is a critical improvement to Kansas' response to crime victims**, and is consistent with the recommendations made in 2021 by K-SARAC to the Kansas Crime Victims Compensation Board.

There are many reasons why someone may not immediately report a crime to law enforcement, especially in cases of sexual assault, domestic violence, and human trafficking. However, obtaining a forensic medical examination allows for evidence to be collected and preserved should the victim decide to report the crime to law enforcement at a later date. In cases of sexual assault, the fees associated with evidence collection are not charged to the victim. For other crimes such as domestic violence or human trafficking, expenses related to evidence collection can be charged to the victim. In addition to evidence collection, obtaining a forensic medical examination allows the victim to receive medical care and treatment of injuries. Regardless of the type of crime, these expenses can be and often are charged to the victim. For victims who do

not have the means to pay for these medical expenses, this serves as a deterrent to access the much-needed medical care and can result in the lack of preservation of criminal evidence, as well as missed opportunities to identify and address health and safety concerns.

These gaps in access to medical care, evidence collection, and services for Kansas crime victims are addressed through the changes proposed in HB 2781. Victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and human trafficking who obtain a forensic medical examination should be able to recover out-of-pocket expenses related to their victimization through the Kansas Crime Victims Compensation program.

I strongly encourage your support for HB 2781, and for crime victims in Kansas.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Kathy Ray
Executive Director