

Kansas State House – Committee on Welfare Reform Hearing
Testimony of Misty Bosch-Hastings, 785.414.0700, mistyb1075@hotmail.com
Chair of Topeka Homeless Taskforce, Lawrence Community Shelter Board Member,
Guest Services Director for the Topeka Rescue Mission, and former Housing and
Homeless Project Coordinator for Kansas Department for Aging and Disability Services

Good afternoon, Chairman Awercamp, distinguished committee members, and staff. Thank you for considering my testimony today.

My name is Misty Bosch-Hastings. I started working with the homeless population in 2005 after losing my father who was frequently homeless due to his mental illness, in a way to honor him. I then began working for KDADS in 2016 as the Housing and Homelessness Project Coordinator on the Behavioral Health Commission. I left this position and moved into 'boots on the ground' work at the Topeka Rescue Mission as the Director of Guest Services. In my personal time I oversee a group of 1500+ volunteers on Facebook called Volunteers Helping Topeka's Homeless. I am also a product of generational poverty and formerly homelessness myself. I say all of that to say this - I have a good eye on what is happening in homelessness not only in Topeka but also across the whole state.

Homelessness is a problem that needs to be solved; however, the piece of legislation up for debate today, House Bill 2430 (HB2430), is the wrong solution at the wrong time.

I urge the committee to understand the homeless service providers in the state are no longer working in silos but are **working together to address homelessness**. For example, Topeka has been blessed with a new city manager that is dedicated to address homelessness, and after a successful collaboration with a winter warming center in Topeka, he has planned a summit to help us all work better together. These types of collaborations are happening all over our State. **The right leaders are finally entering the right positions across our state, CoC's, and cities.**

I understand that Kansas has invested in Housing First, I was with KDADS in 2019 when a very large sum of money was awarded for a Housing First program. I was allowed to use \$100,000 to move almost 65 individuals out of homelessness from railroad property. At last check, around 80% of those individuals were still housed.

I was also able to create a housing program at Topeka Rescue Mission that has about a 95% success rate after one year of being housed.

I respectfully urge the committee to continue to invest in Housing First and fund the agencies that are truly doing the work. I know you are aware of how effective this approach is, particularly among individuals who have experienced homelessness for long durations, and it is more cost-effective than criminalizing homelessness and promoting mass incarceration.

Ending mass homelessness is my personal and professional passion; I deeply care about ending homelessness in this state. I feel we owe it to our fellow humans to take a long, hard look at solutions that are working and, I urge the members of this committee to oppose House Bill 2430.

Sincerely,

Misty Bosch-Hastings

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