

March 4, 2024

Testimony on HB 2490

Submitted to Senate Judiciary By Juvenile Justice Oversight Committee of Kansas

The Juvenile Justice Oversight Committee (JJOC) is established in K.S.A. 75-52,161 and tasked with several items related to juvenile justice reform, to include guiding and evaluating the implementation of the changes in law. The JJOC appreciates the opportunity to offer a perspective on the proposed changes in House Bill 2490.

The JJOC Legislative Subcommittee and the JJOC Chair, support HB 2490.

JJOC appreciates the opportunity to provide information regarding HB 2490, which addresses juvenile offenders limiting overall case length limit extensions to 90 days per extension. The JJOC is committed to data driven, evidence-based policies that increase public safety and hold youth accountable. While we acknowledge there are valid concerns in the years following passage of SB 367, and challenges in the system need to be addressed, any legislative efforts must be data driven and evidence based. As the following will demonstrate JJOC supports the intent of HB 2490, although has concerns that it does not address other ambiguous language related the last years HB 2021, that was passed. At the time, JJOC stood opposed to the passing of HB 2021 for similar concerns.

In regard to HB 2490 we offer the following:

JJOC supports that there should be limits on the length of extension.

- JJOC agrees with the need to outline the use of extensions and providing a limitation of 90 days ensuring that some guardrails are in place for this process. Setting such limitations helps ensure that cases are not unnecessarily extended.

JJOC still has reservations that the legislation does not address other concerns in statute.

- The ability for a court to impose multiple extensions raises the question if it complies or possibly conflicts with evidence-based practices and/or even best practices. JJOC offers an alternative that additional language could be included such as the total length of extension cannot be greater than the original case length limit. For example, if the original term was 1 year, then extensions can only be granted to equal 1 year or four 90-day extensions.
- JJOC is concerned that legislation still allows extend probation periods and case length limits well beyond the any time that is truly beneficial to the youth and the community, and in turn increase the risk to the youth re-offending. Without adherence to evidence-based practice, there is a risk of increasing recidivism and causing additional harm.

JJOC looks forward to being a part of the policy-making process and to fulfilling our statutory charge.