

House Judiciary Committee
Testimony: SB 237—Proponent (Written only)
By Dodie Wellshear
March 17, 2025

Chairwoman Humphries and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit these comments today. I have spent over 30 years working on public policy and collaborating with Kansas organizations to improve family stability and well-being. My passion for this issue is both professional and personal. I grew up in a home where one parent chose not to provide for their children, creating financial strain and family instability that set up negative consequences enduring to this day. Unfortunately, I have seen this same issue persist throughout my career, leaving too many families struggling, while legal loopholes allow some individuals to avoid their obligations.

One of the most concerning examples of this is when a parent refuses to pay court-ordered support, while holding significant retirement savings that remain untouched. This is not an isolated issue—it happens far too often. Children caught in this situation have no way to advocate for themselves and no control over their circumstances. Meanwhile, the parent who is meant to provide for them is able to safeguard their future while neglecting their present responsibilities. This is not just unfair—it is deeply harmful to the most vulnerable members of our communities.

Our laws should not allow individuals to shield assets meant for retirement while their children go without necessities like food, clothing, and medical care.

SB 237 takes a more complete view of a parent's financial situation, ensuring that those with the ability to provide support cannot sidestep their responsibilities. This is not about punishment—it is about justice. No child should be left struggling when a parent has the financial means to help.