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Proponent Testimony on HB 2320
House Committee on K-12 Education Budget
February 13, 2025

Chair Goetz, Vice Chair Hill, Ranking member Winn and members of the committee, my name is Amanda Showalter, Deputy Director of Permanency Services for Cornerstones of Care. Cornerstones of Care is a behavioral health organization with a 154-year history of providing prevention, treatment and support services to children and their families. The children that we serve have all experienced trauma. Trauma resulting from events, such as abuse or neglect, separation from/loss of a loved one, and witnessing or experiencing violence in their community, as well as trauma stemming from ongoing, cumulative experiences like poverty, addiction, and mental illness. Cornerstones of Care currently serves as the Case Management Provider for Area 5, which includes the counties of Leavenworth, Atchison and Wyandotte.

According to the U.S. Department of Education, children in foster care face higher instances of dropping out of school and lower instances of attending or graduating from college. A positive PK-12 education experience can serve as a powerful stabilizing force for foster children, helping to counteract the effects of abuse, neglect, separation, and instability that these vulnerable students face. Furthermore, continued engagement in and completion of a postsecondary credential can enhance their well-being, support successful transitions to adulthood, and improve their opportunities for personal fulfillment and economic independence. HB2320 recognizes the importance of a stable educational experience by making the exchange of school records simpler and faster and by opening up opportunities for youth to attend the schools that best meet their needs.

We believe that HB2320 will allow for that positive educational experience that youth in foster care need and deserve

- HB2320 requires districts in possession of a student's records to be transferred within 2 business days of a request
- HB2320 permits a student in the custody of the Department for Children and Families to attend school in any district
- HB2320 requires the board of education to provide transportation to any nonresident student enrolled in and attending their school.

We ask that you support HB2320 to improve the educational experience for foster youth in Kansas.

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