



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

Chair Goetz, Vice Chair Hill, Ranking Member Winn, and Members of the committee:

I am Tabitha Gibson, Sr. Vice President of Permanency for TFI Family Services. Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony today in support of HB 2320.

TFI is a private, not-for-profit organization founded nearly 60 years ago in Lyon County. We provide a wide range of child welfare and behavioral health services throughout the state. Today, we are a team of over 500 Kansas child welfare and family well-being professionals whose mission is to be Devoted to the Strength of Family. Our current services include early intervention to maintain and strengthen families through Family First intervention programs and Family Preservation, foster care in both family and residential settings, adoption support, independent living services, aftercare, and Case Management services for youth and families in the child welfare system.

As a Case Management Provider, we are continually working to improve placement stability for youth in foster care for whom we experience challenges locating placement providers willing and/or able to meet their needs. Many of the 1,030 children served by TFI's Case Management program will experience at least one placement change during their time in care, often resulting in a change of schools.

Under the revised definitions in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, these youth were no longer eligible to be enrolled in any school district, regardless of their placement status or physical location. Following these revised definitions, Case Management Providers were required to provide proof of address to enroll a youth in school. For children who do not have a long-term placement provider identified, their educational continuity and services are frequently disrupted and delayed.

HB 2320 would grant youth experiencing foster care the ability to be enrolled in any school district regardless of their placement status. The additional requirement of a timely transfer of records between schools is also a benefit to these children when they must experience a change in schools.

Ensuring the opportunity for education and educational support services for youth in foster care, whether they have a long-term placement or not, helps ensure a more successful future. HB 2320 is an important step toward achieving that outcome.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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