



Kansas Children's Service League

Giving Kids Our Best. For Over 100 Years.

## Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee on House Bill 2533

February 8, 2012

Chairperson Kinzer and Members of the Committee:

I am Vicky Roper, Director of the Kansas chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America. I appreciate this opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 2533. The mission of the Kansas Children's Service League (KCSL) is "to protect and promote the well-being of children." Kansas Children's Service League is the Kansas chapter of Prevent Child Abuse America. In this role, we have worked with the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services and other state partners such as the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, Kansas State Department of Education, the Kansas Children's Cabinet and Trust Fund, the Child Advocacy Centers, and Law Enforcement to produce [A Guide to Reporting Child Abuse in Kansas](http://www.srs.ks.gov/agency/cfs/Documents/Child%20Abuse%20Reprting%20Guide.pdf), available at <http://www.srs.ks.gov/agency/cfs/Documents/Child%20Abuse%20Reprting%20Guide.pdf>. KCSL also coordinates a statewide Parent Helpline. The largest volume of calls that come into that line involve questions about reporting child abuse and neglect.

In reviewing HB 2533, we are proponents of the suggested amendments to current law in Kansas regarding mandated reporting of child abuse and neglect. These amendments will help ensure that those who have contact with a child or have any authority over a child because of their position are held accountable for their actions or inactions as they relate to reporting possible child abuse and neglect. We would note that the suggested amendments do not necessarily include all of the employees of the Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services and the Juvenile Justice Authority who have contact with the public or who receive or process information relating to allegations of child abuse and neglect, because not all of those individuals are necessarily licensed. We would recommend that the Committee consider adding language to address that concern.

KCSL also believes that mandated reporters should have training to help them recognize the signs and symptoms of abuse and neglect. In SFY 2011, The Kansas Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services received 60,464 calls to their Child Protection Report Center. It would be anticipated that by increasing the number of mandated reporting groups, there would also be an increase in reports. We believe that making training more readily available might reduce the number of inappropriate calls to SRS reporting child abuse and neglect by newly listed mandated reporters. Training would also help ensure better understanding of the expectations related to these new amendments. KCSL provides training for mandatory reporters, both face-to-face and on its web site at <https://www.kcsl.org/>, at nominal cost, and we're certain there are other similar resources as well. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony related to the impact of House Bill 2533. We would be happy to provide additional details as requested.