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Ray Roberts, Secretary

Sam Brownback, Governor

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From: Ray Roberts, Secretary

RE: PROPOSED ELLSWORTH EXPANSION – MALE INMATES

For the past year the Kansas Department of Corrections (KDOC) has been exploring many strategies to manage the growing male population and mitigate the overcrowded conditions in the Kansas prisons. On February 1, 2012, the male inmate population exceeded prison capacity by 208 beds. According to the Kansas Sentencing Commission, the male population is projected to increase by 1,819 male inmates within the next ten years.

The Governor's recommended budget for FY 2013 includes \$1.5 million designated for contract beds in county jails. While KDOC undeniably needs these funds for additional beds, a new expansion opportunity has become available that I believe will result in a more cost effective option in the long term. It has been brought to my attention that the Saint Francis Boys' Home in Ellsworth, Kansas is slated for closure on March 1, 2012. This closure will result in a vacant campus and the loss of 50 jobs in the Ellsworth community. I would like to propose diverting the \$1.5 million proposed for contract beds to purchase the Saint Francis Boys' Home for the purpose of opening a 95-bed minimum-security unit. This will allow the Department to move 95 minimum-custody inmates currently being housed in medium-security beds into minimum beds, thereby opening 95 beds for medium-custody inmates. This is similar to the Labette project currently underway which will result in relocating 230 minimum and medium geriatric inmates and 32 minimum custody inmates to one location, thereby freeing up much needed bed space for higher custody inmates.

The Saint Francis Boys' Home is located one mile from Ellsworth Correctional Facility (ECF). It is believed that the property can be purchased for approximately \$350,000. By locating a minimum-security unit in Ellsworth, the Department would be able to operate the unit by sharing administrative staff and support services with ECF. This would allow the unit to be operated with 15 FTE'S. The estimated operating costs are approximately \$1,040,000. The medical cost for this project could increase slightly pending discussions with our medical contractor. However, we are not anticipating additional costs.

The cost of purchasing and operating the unit would utilize approximately \$1,400,000 or less of the contract jail bed funds, currently recommended in the FY 2013 Governor's Budget. The one time purchase of a negotiated cost of \$350,000 or less would be a one-time expenditure. The cost would reduce accordingly, in subsequent years. This option

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reduces the cost of operations from the typical cost of \$40 per day in the county jails, to \$30 per day if we operate our own facility, a savings of \$346,750.

In addition to being a low cost expansion option, there are other benefits that would be realized by locating a minimum unit in Ellsworth. The facility currently provides minimum-custody inmate labor for community work crews for city, county, and state agencies such as Kansas Wildlife and Parks and the Kansas Department of Transportation. Additionally, minimum custody private industry workers at the facility are employed in some of the local businesses. 70 minimum custody beds are dedicated to these groups of minimum custody inmates in the Ellsworth Facility. The need for inmate workers in the Ellsworth community exceeds the number currently available. Opening a minimum unit in Ellsworth would increase available workers by 25.

The proposed option would improve the security posture at ECF. Currently, minimum-custody inmates exit and re-enter the facility on a daily basis, providing a prime opportunity for the introduction of contraband into the high security medium facility. ECF currently has the highest rate of positive urinalysis tests in the correctional system due to the large number of inmates working outside the facility. Relocating minimum-custody inmates outside the secure perimeter would almost certainly result in a reduction of contraband.

Lastly, the additional medium-custody beds acquired through this option and the 263 bed Labette Facility option, recommended in the FY 2013 Governor's Budget, will delay the need for contract beds, as well a \$22 million dollar expansion cost at the El Dorado Correctional Facility, for at least one year. The additional medium custody beds will free space in higher custody facilities to house more disruptive inmates at higher custody facilities.

I appreciate your consideration of this request. I truly believe this is the best utilization of funds for the State, which is only made possible due to the low cost of the building, the number of minimum-custody inmates at ECF being housed in medium-security beds, and the proximity to shared services and staffing with ECF.