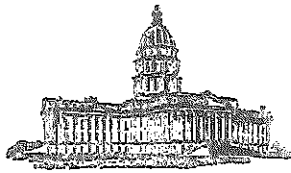


State of Kansas



**TY MASTERSON**

Senate President  
February 16, 2023

**Senate Judiciary Committee**

**Proponent Testimony for SB 232**

Chair Warren, Vice Chair Wilborn, Ranking Member Corson and members of the committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear today in support of SB 232, legislation that would create The Office of the Child Advocate. This important legislation will provide much needed accountability to the child welfare system, which is necessary to ensure the safety and welfare of Kansas children.

Throughout my tenure in the legislature, accountability has been lacking in our child welfare system. SB 232 addresses that problem by setting up the Office of the Child Advocate via an appointment by the governor and confirmation by the Senate. The bill outlines stringent requirements in order to ensure an independent and impartial review of disputed actions or inactions regarding any child at risk of abuse or neglect by the Kansas Department for Children and Families, the contracting agencies of the department, and the Kansas Department of Corrections.

For too long, we have heard horror stories regarding children in our foster care program that would break your heart and make you angry. As policy makers, one of our foremost responsibilities is to ensure that children who are in the states' care have a voice – and we can do that by removing as much partisan politics from the equation as possible and find common ground - and that's what we are attempting to do with this bill. This legislation would bring in a true independent set of eyes to examine the circumstances, and truly *advocates* for what is in the best interest of the child. I believe this bill accomplishes that goal.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak to you today in support of SB 232.