



March 21, 2023

Daniel Klaassen, Education Policy Advisor
Kansas Action for Children
Opponent Written Testimony on SB 234
Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare

Chairperson Gossage and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to SB 234, which prevents the sharing of information with closed-loop referral systems. Kansas Action for Children is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization working to make Kansas a place where every child has the opportunity to grow up healthy and thrive.

Kansans rely on a variety of different services to meet their needs. From health care and transportation to education and child care, every resident benefits from these public services in some way. We agree that individuals' personal information should be greatly protected. **However, when agencies are allowed to share information, the application process is simplified and Kansans can receive the benefits of those services more quickly.**

While the intent of the bill seems to be to protect personal information, in reality, it will impact the ability of Kansans to be referred to and access critical services like child care. **Requiring an individual to consent at each instance of a referral is a high bar that could take a significant portion of an individual's or organization's time.** While this may protect some information, the impact of more barriers to learning about resources could be greater. For instance, if families can no longer find child care because another barrier is in the way, the crisis will only worsen.

Proponents of this bill give the following scenario. A woman enters a domestic violence shelter and also picks up food from a food pantry. She shares information with the shelter, but the shelter cannot share any information with partners in their network. Seemingly, it would be beneficial to protect her private information. However, if we examine the impact more closely, we find that further help for someone in such a situation would be difficult to provide. This woman could benefit from services provided by in-network partners that she qualifies for, but without her documented consent, they are unable to refer her to another organization.

With much uncertainty around the implications and unintended consequences, it would be imprudent to advance this bill out of committee. **Kansas Action for Children stands in opposition to SB 234.**

Thank you for the opportunity to share information with you today. Feel free to reach me if you have any questions at daniel@kac.org