



Kansas Children's Service League

Stronger families start here.

Senate Committee on Health and Public Welfare

SB 234

Written Neutral Testimony

March 21, 2023

Thank you Chair Gossage, Vice Chair Erickson, Ranking Minority Member Pettey and Committee Members for the opportunity to provide written neutral testimony of SB 234. Kansas Children's Service League (KCSL) is a statewide private, non-profit, 501(c)3 serving children and their families. We are the Kansas Chapter for Prevent Child Abuse America.

Childhood adversity includes abuse and neglect as well as other household dysfunctions. The childhood trauma stemming from adversity can have a profound impact on social connections, school readiness, and an increased likelihood of developing negative coping mechanisms. BUT we also know children and adults who have experienced adversity have great capacity to also build resiliency. **Ensuring parents have access to concrete supports and services has been shown to reduce household stressors which can contribute to child abuse and neglect.**

One of the primary roles KCSL has as a part of the chapter network for Prevent Child Abuse America, is a 24/7 parent helpline which is available to parents 365 days a year. This parent helpline allows parents to seek out resources in their community. Over the past four years KCSL has worked with state departments, including KDHE, DCF, KSDE, KDOC and CCTF to promote awareness and utilization of 1-800-CHILDREN. During this time, we entered a formal partnership with FindHelp. 1-800-CHILDREN call line, website, and mobile app is a closed loop referral system. All searches and calls are anonymous UNLESS a parent chooses to provide their information for the purpose of KCSL sending a referral to an organization. KCSL also works with other resources and referral systems, including IRIS, based on local partner requests.

KCSL would recommend the following amendments to SB 237, to ensure parents and ultimately children are able to continue to access the necessary services they need without an undue financial burden on local non-profit providers.

- Ensure that the proposed law does not disrupt established childcare, mental health, public health, family support, and prevention services referral networks.
- Allow a grace period for existing closed-loop referral networks to review the law and make needed changes to come into compliance.
- Encourage coordination between referral platforms for the investments local communities have already made for existing practices to continue.

Thank you for your consideration.

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