

STATE CAPITOL
TOPEKA, KS 66612
O: (785) 296-7656
kristen.o'shea@senate.ks.gov



KRISTEN O'SHEA
SENATOR 18TH DISTRICT
4630 NW TIMBER CT.
TOPEKA, KS 66618

KRISTEN O'SHEA
STATE OF KANSAS
SENATOR

March 11, 2024

HB2811
Proponent
Oral Testimony

To: Representative Troy Waymaster and Members of the House Appropriations Committee

The Topeka Correctional Facility is the state's only women's prison. There are roughly 800 women there and last year 10 came in being pregnant and that number is expected to rise.

Right now, these moms to be go to the hospital like any other mom and spend two days with their precious newborn. Then they part ways. Baby goes to family, friends or unfortunately, enters the foster care system.

If your heart and mind aren't in a tailspin at this point, I'm not sure why not. After birth, Mom needs baby and baby needs mom. Right now, for my baby inside of me I am the sole source of food and I will continue to be for the first 5 months of life on this earth and a main source for at least a year. When baby needs to eat, I need to nurse and when I need to nurse baby needs to eat. It is a natural rhythm that God has built inside of moms and babies.

We had a young mother who delivered her baby, loved on him for 24 hours and then left him with her parents who then boarded a plane to Pennsylvania. Although she was able to have Mother/Infant bonding Zoom visits 3x's per week through the WALC program, she did not get to physically touch her son until she was released 16 months later. I encourage you to preview Monica's testimony, she is a mom who found herself giving birth while at TCF. She found God there and is doing amazing things now and all her children in her life. It is a very redemptive story.

We modeled this bill after the MO prison nursery program that passed just last year. Kansas could become the 11th state to have a nursery program. KDOC has been studying other successful states such as Nebraska who has had this program since 1994. KDOC and the team at TCF have also been preparing for this and have a long list of donors and volunteers eager to make it happen!

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kristen O'Shea".

Kristen O'Shea
Senator District 18