

Kansas

Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services *Children and Family Services*

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Written testimony of:

Gina Meier-Hummel, Director of Children and Family Services
Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services
Topeka, Kansas

presented to:

The Hon. Tim Owens and Honorable Members
of the Kansas House Judiciary Committee:

SRS testimony on HB 2533

Chairman Owens, Vice-Chair King, Ranking Member Haley and Honored Members:

Mister Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding HB 2533. House Bill 2533 as amended modifies the responsibilities of mandated reporters, expands the list of mandatory reporters, and revises the penalties for failing to report child abuse.

SRS is in support of all measures that will help ensure the safety and will be proactive in preventing abuse of all children in Kansas. In order to implement the provisions of this legislation, appropriate funds must be allotted to cover the increased staff we will be required. While SRS understands there will be a fiscal impact, the agency is not able to make an accurate estimate of the increase in calls received by the Kansas Protection Report Center, and reports assigned to the field for investigation. During FY 2011, 95,154 reports were received by the report center. For FY 2012, 99,362 reports are estimated to be received by the report center.

Senate Judiciary
3-14-12
Attachment 5

Current staffing provides 45 intake workers and 21 social workers for assessment and investigation of reports received. The agency estimates a 5.0 percent increase in calls and reports assigned for investigation. For this increase, the agency would need 18 additional positions at an annual cost of approximately \$1.0 million.

The bill as amended includes as mandatory reporters contractors of educational institutions, and animal control officers. The amended version also adds clarifying language by including in the description of mandatory reporters "those who work in a position of authority over a child in an official capacity"

Although the agency believes the intent of this newly added language was to add clarity to those that are listed as mandatory reporters, by including the reference to those in a "position of authority", it is possible that this narrows those mandated to report and adds confusion for the institutions, municipalities, and organizations in identifying who are mandated reporters. We will leave it up to the wisdom of the body if you chose to amend these references in Section 1(c) (3), Section 1 (c) (6), and Section 1 (c) (7).

Thank you.

**Gina Meier-Hummel
Director, Children and Family
Services**