

# DCF LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY



*March 16, 2022*

**TESTIMONY OF**

Stacy Tidwell, Deputy Director of Youth Programs  
Kansas Department for Children and Families

**TESTIMONY ON**

House Bill 2468

**Chair**

Representative Concannon

**Vice Chair**

Representative Esau

**Ranking Minority**

Representative Ousley

**and**

**Members of the Committee**

## SUMMARY OF ISSUE & DCF POSITION

Chairwoman Concannon and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 2468.

HB 2468 creates statutory provisions for the Kansas Foster Youth Bill of Rights by amending the Kansas Code for Care of Children. Every child placed in foster care should have the right to be: safe where they live, live with their siblings when possible, be connected to their family, feel loved and sense of belonging, have access to what is needed for success in school, and when developmentally appropriate be engaged in their case planning, placement changes, and court hearings. Youth who are given a voice and a stake in their future become active participants in their lives.

Many of the youth I have worked with over the years have not had their basic rights explained to them nor a process laid out for resolution when issues arise. This creates an environment where youth are disengaged from planning for their futures and less likely to work towards achievement of goals set for them. We need Kansas youth to be vested in their futures and actively working towards self-sufficiency. Creating a Foster Youth Bill of Rights lays the statutory groundwork for children and youth to actively become participants in their lives and gain back control lost while experiencing placement into foster care.

This bill is an important part of better serving vulnerable children and youth placed in foster care. Every child should have the right to feel safe where they live, to be treated with respect, to be provided food, clothing and the tools needed to experience normalcy in their childhood like their non-system involved peers.

The Department for Children and Families indicates that this legislation as written would have no fiscal effect on the agency and supports House Bill 2468.