



United Community Services of Johnson County

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Testimony to Senate Commerce Committee February 20, 2013

Presented by United Community Services (UCS) of Johnson County

UCS opposes SB 149. United Community Services of Johnson County (UCS) is a small nonprofit human service planning organization that works in partnership with nonprofit organizations, local government and United Way.

We urge members of the Committee to familiarize themselves with the current rules and regulations for receiving TANF and sanctions for non-compliance. Before receiving any TANF payments, those eligible are screened for substance abuse by a trained counselor. The rules and regulations specified in the Kansas Economic and Employment Support Services Manual (KEESSM) utilized by the Department of Children and Families provides specific details for the screening process and subsequent steps for anyone assessed to be in need of substance abuse services.

We support efforts that are aimed at providing drug treatment and comprehensive services as part of work readiness programs as an effective method of removing barriers to employment. It is our understanding that the state of Kansas currently implements a program with this aim, and that substance abuse screening for TANF recipients is a part of that program. A strength of the current program is that it addresses not only drugs, but alcohol. Alcohol is the most frequently used substance by Kansans of all income levels.

The required drug testing provisions of SB 149 do not add value to either low-income families or the state; rather implementation would divert funding from services in order to administer a program that is less effective than current practice at the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Wulfkuhle

