



Senate Committee on Commerce

February 20, 2013

SB 149: Drug Testing of Cash
Assistance Applicants and Recipients

Presented by:

Michelle Schroeder

Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs

Kansas Department for Children and Families

For additional information, contact:

Michelle Schroeder, Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs
Docking State Office Building, 6th Floor North
(785) 296-3271

February 20, 2013

Neutral Testimony of:

Michelle Schroeder, Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs, Department for Children and Families

Presented to:

The Honorable *Julia Lynn* and Honorable Members
Senate Committee on Commerce.

DCF testimony on Drug Testing of Cash Assistance Applicants and Recipients

Chairman Lynn, Vice-Chair Wagle, and Ranking Member Holland:

I am Michelle Schroeder, Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs with the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF). Thank you for the opportunity to discuss drug testing of cash assistance applicants and recipients.

In Kansas, DCF administers the TANF cash assistance program for children and families. As a result of the 1996 Welfare to Work legislation, the TANF program is a temporary program meant to be a bridge from poverty to employment. This employment aspect is cornerstone to the TANF program. All TANF recipients are required to take part in work activities which will aid that recipient to finding and maintaining employment and ultimately self-sufficiency.

Substance use problems and substance abuse are clear barriers to employment. Early detection and treatment of substance use problems will assist in removal of this barrier and will move the applicant or current cash recipient towards self-sufficiency. Obtaining necessary job skills or training while undergoing treatment in order to continue receiving financial assistance will further aid recipients in this movement. Knowledge that a recipient is substance free will increase employment options including industries that require mandatory drug testing of all new employees.

Senate Bill 149 establishes requirements for suspicion-based drug testing of cash assistance applicants and recipients. Applicants or recipients of cash assistance testing positive for controlled substance use will be allowed the opportunity to undergo substance abuse treatment to address their use of illegal substances and remove this barrier from employment. By requiring completion of a substance abuse treatment program as well as a skills training course, individuals will obtain the skills necessary to gain employment and move to self-sufficiency.

A positive drug test will require the applicant or recipient to complete a substance abuse treatment and a skills training course in order to be eligible for cash assistance. Subsequent failing of a drug test results in one year ineligibility for cash assistance and the completion of a substance abuse treatment and a skills training course in order to be eligible for cash assistance. A third positive drug test results in termination of eligibility of cash assistance.

So as not to harm the children in the household, the cash assistance may continue to be received on behalf of the child(ren) with the addition of a protective payee. The protective payee named by the individual may also be required to undergo drug testing. If this individual fails the drug screen, a person named by DCF will be assigned as the protective payee.

Senate Bill 149 also prevents anyone convicted of a felony drug offense after July 1, 2013 from receiving cash assistance for five years for a first offense and subsequent offenses removes eligibility for their lifetime.

I thank you for the opportunity to address the important issue of drug testing of cash assistance applicants and recipients. I am happy to answer any questions the committee may have.