

Date: 2.15.2021

I have worked with Kansas' foster care system, within and as an outsider, for over 30 years and know it is a very difficult and complex career, filled with many voices clamoring to be heard and cared for as well to be "adjudicated." When I started in 1981, there seemed to be a healthy, smooth stream-lined services for children, some bumps – always, because we're all human, but not the deaths we see today or the increased homelessness children and their families experience .. where poverty is at an all time high, cost of living doesn't match earnings, and wages are stagnant and childhood suicide is on the rise.

With an "Office of Child Advocacy," the focus will be on what matters in Kansas ... children and those who care and want what is best for them. When we work together .. on the same page .. with knowledge and honesty above board, there is less chance of the horror seen on some of the front pages of our newspapers, like the murder of our foster children and the lesser crimes of children staying in workers' offices over-night, which happens when no one wants an acting-out 14-yr old adolescent at 2:00am delivered to their home. To have professional staff who are competent and understanding how a foster situation can go asunder during the adoption phrase would be wonderful thereby taking the stress away from other agencies who should not be involved in such an intimate situation ....

I haven't seen much good this legislature session but this is one of the good potential ideas .. and it needs to pass and become a solid reality for Kansas children.

Thank you for your time ..

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