

Testimony of Randy Puett; Kansas Kids Matter

House Children and Seniors Committee In Support of HB 2345 February 17, 2021

Members of the committee,

My name is Randy Puett and I would like to share my family's experience with the Department of Children and Families and KVC.

My oldest daughter was placed into their custody in 2019. For a short time, they kept her at the office all day. She was provided no opportunity to shower for 4 days. She was given nowhere to wash her clothes and she was eating fast food all the time.

At one of their temporary houses, where they take the kids to sleep at night, my daughter was being bullied and ran away. She jumped out a 2 story room window to get away from a situation she, as a child knew, was not right and unsafe. All this happened and yet KVC did not tell me for 9 days that she had run away. So I did what any father would and found her myself. My story has been reported in the news: 13 WIBW, KSNT 27, and CJonline. All did articles about what she went through. I would not let her go back to DCF or KVC.

My family's story is unfortunately shared by too many Kansans affected by a system that is taking too many of our kids from their loving homes and confuses poverty and struggle for neglect. Our experiences were so bad that I had to act to protect my kids and others. Since then I have created Kansas Kids Matter, a group for people going through hardships with DCF and KVC and do right by our children and protecting them from the brokenness of the Kansas foster care system. This shared experience with a broken, harmful system is why I support House Bill 2345 to establish an Office of the Child Advocate.