

HB 2574
House Committee on Judiciary
Written Testimony
February 9, 2022
Proponent

Chairperson Patton and Members of the Committee:

The Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence (KCSDV) is a statewide non-profit organization whose membership is the 25 sexual and domestic violence programs serving victims across Kansas. KCSDV provides information, training, and analysis on issues impacting victims of domestic and sexual violence, their families, and their communities. Our members, the local advocacy programs, are committed to providing quality services to victims of sexual assault and domestic violence, empowering victims to live independently without the ongoing fear of violence, and helping victims secure the resources necessary for a safe and healthy future.

KCSDV supports the passage of HB 2574. An increase in the amount of time that a survivor has in which to file a compensation claim is always a benefit to survivors of sexual violence.

The proposed extension in this bill will allow survivors to seek out reimbursement for mental health treatment that they receive after learning the identity of their rapist through the processing of a sexual assault evidence collection kit. While this ideally would occur in close proximity to the attack and subsequent examination, there has historically been a backlog of kits and a delay in testing. While efforts are underway to minimize the risk of this happening again, it is still a possibility. Additionally, there is the risk that a previously unidentified rapist would later be put into the system in a different case and this could lead to identification. When this occurs, a survivor should be afforded access to mental health services to process this new information.

Access to appropriate mental health treatment can have a profound impact on survivors of sexual violence's ability to process their experience, deal with the associated trauma, and continue to live a healthy life. Ideally, all sexual assault survivors would have access to mental health treatment at any and all phases of their lives. While that is not the current proposal, this bill provides additional time for survivors to access much-needed services and KCSDV strongly supports it.

Sincerely submitted on behalf of KCSDV,

Lindsie Ford, JD
Public Policy Attorney
KCSDV
634 SW Harrison Street
Topeka, Kansas 66603