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BLAINE FINCH
59TH DISTRICT

Testimony to House Judiciary Committee in favor of HB 2205

Representative Blaine Finch, District 59

February 13, 2013

Mr. Chairman, Distinguished Ranking Member and Honorable Members of the Committee:

I offer this testimony in support of HB 2205. This bill will improve the adoption process by removing a 30 day waiting period between the filing of an adoption petition and the hearing by the court.

Current law requires a court hearing an adoption to hold the hearing not less than 30 days nor more than 60 days following the filing of the petition. This bill removes the 30 day minimum while keeping the 60 day outside limit. Also, the bill provides that interested parties will be given notice, but could waive that notice in order to move the hearing process quickly to resolution.

One of the fundamental principles of our state law for children in need of care is that children experience time differently than adults. What seems short to adults can seem like forever to children, especially those waiting to have a permanent family. Therefore, removing even one month from the process of obtaining a loving, forever home can mean a great deal to these children.

In addition, passage of this bill will address an existing conflict among district courts in Kansas. Currently some district courts interpret the statute to allow a waiver of the 30 day requirement, while others construe the statute strictly and refuse to allow any waiver of the provision. This leads to forum shopping and children being treated differently depending on which county they happen to live in. This bill clarifies the law and treats all children the same.

I thank you for your consideration and urge your favorable vote for HB 2205.