

January 16, 2018
Senate Public Health and Welfare
Testimony In Support of Senate Bill 221
Hon. Kathleen Sloan
District Judge, 10th Judicial District
Johnson County

Chairman Schmidt and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear here today to testify in support of Senate Bill 221.

I am Kathleen Sloan, a district judge presiding over Child In Need of Care (CINC) cases in Johnson County. I also serve as a member of the Supreme Court Task Force on Permanency Planning (SCTFPP).

The SCTFPP is a multi-disciplinary body which provides guidance, assistance, and training for child welfare stakeholders such as judges, attorneys, Court Appointed Special Advocates, and child welfare agencies. Additionally, the SCTFPP serves as the advisory committee for the Kansas Court Improvement Project.

The SCTFPP reviewed a draft of SB 221 prior to the 2017 session and found a majority of the revisions provided much needed clarification and guidance within the CINC Code. Examples of such clarification include:

- Revision to the definitions of "kinship care placement" and "relative";
- Addition of interested parties to the list of persons entitled to notice of dispositional hearings;
- Substitution of "custody of the secretary and placed with neither parent for 15 of the most recent 22 months..." for the defined "extended out of home placement" to clarify mandates under the federal Adoption and Safe Families Act;
- Revision of K.S.A. 38-2268 to require (1) the approval by the guardian ad litem and (2) the acceptance and approval by the Secretary for the Department of Children and Families when a parent wishes to relinquish rights to a child; and
- Additions to the Newborn Infant Protection Act to further address gaps in the current Act such as notice and father's rights.

On behalf of the SCTFPP, I ask that the committee consider this bill favorably. Thank you for allowing me to testify. I will stand for any questions you may have at this time.