



February 19, 2020

Regarding House Bill No. 2187

As an organization that works with foster parents, relative and kin caregivers, biological families, and foster and adopted children, FosterAdopt Connect is grateful for an effective and transparent child welfare system that works in the best interest of Kansas children. Each child is worthy of love, safety, and stability. Children deserve to heal from their undeserved experiences of abuse and neglect and flourish into adulthood.

The proposed Office of the Child Advocate brings consistency and clarity to a fragmented child welfare system. The Office of the Child Advocate will serve the best interest of children as it collaborates with the legislature, DCF, and private contractors by providing a centralized process of review for greater accountability. It will also serve Kansas children by opening a defined channel of communication for our community of biological families, foster parents, and general citizens to express concerns related to the safety and well-being of children. The legislature can also anticipate systemic improvements since greater visibility into the child welfare system will provide informed and timely reports.

In the Kansas City region alone, an estimated 422 children in 2019 benefited from two foster parent advocates. These advocates work to help children and families achieve the best possible outcomes when confronted with the barriers and obstacles that exist within the very complicated child welfare system. There is a great need across the entire state for a neutral party serving the best interest of children.

The transparency, responsiveness, and accountability that the Office of the Child Advocate gives Kansas citizens is aligned with legislative values and sets the tone for a better child welfare system by supporting better outcomes for children. By creating the Officer of the Child Advocate, we are risking no harm and gaining the improved safety and flourishing of children across the state.

Sarah Jeffries
FosterAdopt Connect