

HB 2281
House Committee on Health and Human Services
Written Testimony
February 15, 2022
Proponent

Chairperson Landwehr 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.

Access to appropriate mental health treatment can have a profound impact on survivors of domestic and sexual violence's ability to process their experience, deal with the associated trauma, and continue to live a healthy life. Ideally, all survivors would have access to mental health treatment at any and all phases of their lives. While that may not be possible, the creation of and support of a hotline that would allow survivors to access to counselors in the middle of a mental health crisis could provide potentially life saving measures.

Survivors of domestic and sexual violence come from all walks of life. They experience a wide variety of experiences and access to the criminal justice system. These experiences can make some reluctant to avail themselves of traditional means of interacting with law enforcement, such as calling 911 during an emergency. Having a system in place that provides another mental health/crisis intervention alternative offers additional options for those in crisis. Providing those in crisis with the appropriate services will reduce potentially harmful outcomes.

Lastly, we cannot overlook the unfortunate reality that many abusers face mental health challenges of their own. Unfortunately, the risks associated with suicide in abusers is not limited to just them. Often abusers will kill their partner, or even their entire family, before taking their own lives. Again, increasing access to counselors could be beneficial in reducing the risk to the community as a whole.

For the reasons stated above, KCSDV supports the passage of HB 2281.

Sincerely submitted on behalf of KCSDV,

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