

Testimony of Valerie Cahill
House Commerce Committee
March 4, 2015
HB 2381: Kansas HOPE Act

Good Morning Mr. Chairman Hutton:

My name is Valerie Cahill, and I would like to thank you all for the opportunity to be here and allow me to speak on the Subject of Welfare Reform.

I was a recipient of TANF.

I believe that everyone should work for what they need and want.

For the months that I was receiving assistance from the State, I wasn't happy. It wasn't that I was not appreciative for the help, but because I knew that I could and should be doing better than what I was.

I thought I was doing everything I could to get back on track. It had been 10 months since I worked and I was frustrated.

I received a letter for DCF that in essence stated I needed to participate in the Work Training Program. My initial thought: I don't need these people to tell me how to work. I've worked all my life, I know how to do that.

But, I didn't have a job.

I then reported to DCF for the Work Training Program as a condition of continuing to receive State Benefits.

What I know is this, when I entered the classroom for the first time, I saw people who were not like me, and I became even more frustrated. I heard a woman say, everyone in this room is no different from anyone else in this room. We are all on TANF, and we all need a job.

At that moment I said, "ok, give me something else."

The work programs the State offers is key. I believe, in the words of Gallileo Gallilei, "You cannot teach a man anything, you can only help him find it within himself." In order to do that, they, (we) have to be given the tools we need for us to be successful

Conditioning. Training, Re-thinking our values.

The work program, along with Strategic Training Solutions, hand in hand did this for me.

It is my personal belief that, to ensure our children a chance at survival, it is necessary, imperative that a law be passed mandating that in order to receive any benefits from the State, you must participate.

For me, it's very simple. You can live or you can just exist.

