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Partners in America's Poverty Fighting Network

Testimony Before the House Health and Human Services Committee on SB 193
Scott Anglemeyer, Executive Director, Kansas Association of Community Action Programs
March 13, 2019

Chairperson Landwehr and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Scott Anglemeyer, and I am the executive director of the Kansas Association of Community Action Programs (KACAP). KACAP is the membership association for Community Action Agencies in Kansas that are working to create economic opportunity and end poverty in their communities. Our member agencies work to better focus local, state, private, and federal resources to assist low-income individuals and families become more self-sufficient. Together, our agencies provide services to over 21,000 low-income Kansans each year.

Because poverty is a multi-faceted problem, KACAP member agencies work closely with a number of partners in their communities. Increasing numbers of the families we serve have had or are having contact with the child welfare system, and/or have families members with possible mental health issues. Serving these families requires that our agencies work closely with social workers in these systems. Our agencies report that the professionals they work with are experiencing high levels of stress, due to high caseloads, due at least in part to a shortage of social workers in key parts of the state. That stress, in turn, contributes to high turnover rates, exacerbating shortages.

Beyond staff stress levels, the shortage of social workers creates backlogs and negatively impacts quality of care. Because these services contribute to our efforts to help people escape poverty, addressing social worker shortages is important to KACAP. That is why we support SB 193.

SB 193 is a reasonable way to address social worker shortages. The bill reduces the hurdles that a social worker from another state must clear if he or she wants to relocate to Kansas while keeping safeguards in place to preserve quality of care. It represents a responsible step toward addressing critical shortages, and therefore KACAP supports its passage.

KACAP Member Agencies and Board of Directors

Community Action, Inc.

East Central Kansas Economic Opportunity Corp.

Economic Opportunity Foundation

Harvest America Corp.

Mid-Kansas Community Action Program

Northeast Kansas Community Action Program

Southeast Kansas Community Action Program

Wichita Sedgwick County Community Action Partnership