

DCF LEGISLATIVE TESTIMONY



2/1/2021

TESTIMONY OF

Tanya Keys, Deputy Secretary
Kansas Department for Children and Families

TESTIMONY ON

HB 2088

Chair

Barker

Vice Chair

Arnberger

Ranking Member

Ruiz

and

Members of the Committee

SUMMARY OF ISSUE & DCF POSITION

House Bill 2088 proposes changes to the statutes that regulate child abuse and neglect investigations. This proposed legislation will require visual observation of an alleged victim of child abuse or neglect as part of a DCF or law enforcement investigation.

DCF stands in support of HB 2088. Requiring visual observation of a child when child abuse or neglect is reported is consistent with DCF policy and procedure and DCF supports efforts to codify this policy.

CONTEXT & HISTORY

KSA 38-2226 requires that DCF receive and investigate reports of child abuse or neglect for the purpose of determining whether the report is valid and whether action is required to protect a child. The Kansas Protection Report Center, administered by DCF, receives such reports while DCF Child Protection Specialists investigate them in the community.

DCF's existing policy and procedure manual for Prevention and Protections Services requires that CPS investigators observe an alleged victim of child abuse or neglect during the course of their investigation of such a report. Specifically, DCF Policy and Procedure Manual section 2110 requires, "when physical abuse or neglect is alleged, the child's body shall be observed or examined for evidence of alleged physical trauma (e.g. bruises or burns) or physical condition (e.g. bug bites, body dirt)."

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION

HB 2088 will amend KSA 38-2226 to require that DCF and law enforcement visually observe an alleged victim of child abuse or neglect during the course of the investigation of the report and document that observation. In instances when DCF and law enforcement are jointly investigating a case both will be required to visually observe the child.

FISCAL IMPACT OF LEGISLATION

The visual observation of the alleged child victim is consistent with requirements currently in DCF Prevention and Protection Services policy. There will be no fiscal impact from the addition of this language to K.S.A. 2020 Supp. 38-2226.

DCF POSITION

DCF continues its commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of the children of Kansas and stands in support of House Bill 2088 as it will support and codify existing DCF policy regarding visual observation of alleged victims of child abuse and neglect.