

Laura Howard, Secretary

Laura Kelly, Governor

February 15, 2023

Chairperson Concannon and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you on House Bill 2377. This bill adds language to K.S.A. 65-2418 of the Vital Statistics Act requiring the Kansas Department of Health and Environment to waive fees on birth and death certificates ordered by the Kansas Department for Children and Families and the Court related to a child in need of care proceeding. The bill also requires KDHE to complete requests within a 48-hour window of a request from the DCF Secretary or the receipt of a journal entry regarding a child coming into state custody.

The intention behind the bill is important one. Delays in receipt of vital documents in child in need of care proceedings means delays in permanency, especially adoption. While both agencies believe these records should be expedited, we have not yet had enough time to work through the issues in order to avoid any unintended consequences of this bill. KDHE estimates a loss of \$98,160 in annual revenue if this bill is enacted. HB2377 also references a 48-hour turnaround on these requests. If the intent is for Vital Statistics to complete these requests in 48-hours, including weekends, then additional staff will be needed. We assume that the intent was a 2-day business-day turnaround, rather than the current Vital Statistics request turnaround of 10 business days.

In addition to waiving fees, the proposed bill also prescribes specific procedures in the law. Both DCF and KDHE believe that we can achieve the goal of this legislation without amending the Vital Statistics Act. For these reasons, DCF and KDHE would appreciate the opportunity to address this concern administratively without legislative action at this time. A potential Memorandum of Understanding between the two agencies would provide flexibility not only in the cost to both agencies, but also to the process and practice of the timelines for vital statistic requests.

Thank you again for the opportunity to present to you today,

Secretary Laura Howard, Kansas Department for Children and Families
and
Secretary Janet Stanek, Kansas Department of Health and Environment