

Chairperson Patton and Members of the House Committee on Judiciary,

The Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence (KCSDV) is a statewide non-profit organization whose membership includes 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. KCSDV member 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 to help victims secure resources necessary for a safe and healthy future.

Currently, a protection order remains in effect for one year from the time it is granted. HB 2029 will extend this initial protection for a period not less than two years and not more than five years. KCSDV supports HB 2029.

There are two types of protection orders. Protection from Abuse Orders and Protection from Stalking, Sexual Assault, or Human Trafficking Orders. When used in conjunction with a comprehensive safety plan, protection orders can be a helpful legal tool for victims.

Applying for a protection order is a step toward independence, but it can also be a threat to an abuser, a stalker, or a trafficker's sense of power and control over their victim. This can increase the danger, violence, and risk of death to a victim. The decision to file a protection order takes an extreme amount of courage, safety planning, and trust in the judicial process.

Under current Kansas statute, victims experiencing multiple years of violence must refile or file to extend a protection order with the court before its expiration. The burden of this process is entirely on the victim and there is no court notification when an order is about to expire. Victims are often expected to navigate a complex legal system, safety plan, and understand how to apply for renewal without the support of legal representation. The reapplication process requires victims to revisit experiences of trauma and increases unnecessary barriers victims often face when required to engage with the court. The initial protection created by HB 2029 for a period not less than two years and not more than five years will allow victims additional time to navigate barriers.

HB 2029 will increase efficiency and create cost savings for Kansas court systems. Court dockets face backlogs, further exacerbated by COVID-19. When the initial protection period is extended, the most emergent cases can take priority.

Last month, the Rural Justice Initiative Committee highlighted a shortage of attorneys in Kansas. With a shortage of attorneys, extending the initial period for a protection order will allow attorneys to provide services to more victims.



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HB 2029 will reduce the strain on law enforcement departments. Personal service is required by statute and this service responsibility often falls on law enforcement departments. Extending the period in which a protection order is in effect will reduce the number of times law enforcement will need to conduct personal service.

KCSDV respectfully urges the committee to recommend HB 2029 favorably.

Sincerely submitted on behalf of KCSDV,

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