

Kansas Chapter  
National Association of Social Workers  
*...advocating for the practice and profession of Social Work...*

**Testimony: HB 2039**

**January 28, 2015**

**House Judiciary**

Presented by Sky Westerlund, LMSW

The Kansas Chapter, National Association of Social Workers (KNASW) is the professional association working on behalf of the profession and practice of social work in Kansas. Social workers have been licensed at three levels of practice since 1976. These are the baccalaureate (LBSW), the master (LMSW), and the independent clinical social worker (LCSW). We are the largest group of mental health providers with over 6000 social workers practicing in the majority of the 105 counties in Kansas. The practice of social work is performed in many fields including adoptions, addictions, aging, child welfare, courts and corrections, corporations and businesses, domestic violence, early childhood, hospitals and health, hospice and palliative care, mental health, community based prevention, problem gambling, pre-schools and schools, trauma, veterans and military, research and teaching, and more. We work in both the public and private sectors of the economy. Social workers serve thousands of Kansans everyday.

KNASW is neutral on HB 2039.

Our society has made a commitment to protect children. What rises above all else is doing what is in the best interest of the child. Sometimes, when parents are not willing or able to resolve differences in the interest of parenting their children, others step in. If various methods of resolving conflicts fail, 'domestic case management' can come into play. DCM functions largely as an immediate response to a problem related to the court ordered parenting plan that cannot be reasonably resolved by the parents, on their own.

Of specific concern:

Page 5; deleted section (d) (1): Deleting the language that says if parties are not able to resolve their differences, they are to follow the recommendations of the DCM, seems to remove a primary reason for DCM in the first place. If the immediate dispute cannot be resolved, children are caught in the crossfire. Problem solving has not worked. There is a need for a family referee. However, substantive and long term concerns such as custody arrangements or suggested changes to the parenting plan must still go through the court process.

Page 3; section f: Licensed social workers are under the jurisdiction of the Behavioral Sciences Regulatory Board (BSRB) for their continuing education. In the DCM law, current language says these licensed professionals must obtain a minimum number of CE related to their work as a domestic case manager. The proposed language addresses legal CE but not social work CE.

Page 5; section e: It is unclear what the proposed language means when it says that such meetings with a DCM "may be informal." Having a DCM is a professional relationship.

Contact information

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