

State of Kansas  
House of Representatives

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Daniel R. Hawkins  
House Majority Leader  
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Written Testimony in Support of HB 2115

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

In 2013, the Medicaid system in Kansas was transitioned to managed care, and the program became known as KanCare. The first few years brought many challenges to light. Representative David Crum who was Chair of the House Health Committee at the time quickly realized the Legislature would need to form an Oversight Committee in order to get ahead of the problems that were occurring. Chairman Crum's solution was to form the Robert G. (Bob) Bethel Joint Committee on Home and Community Based Services and KanCare Oversight. This committee has continuously operated since that time, and to good effect. Without this joint oversight committee, it clearly would have taken much longer to solve the difficulties associated with the reorganization of the Kansas Medicaid system to KanCare.

House Bill 2115 seeks to establish a joint committee on Child Welfare System Oversight in the same spirit as the Bob Bethel Joint Committee, and for good reason. Our state has experienced significant problems with the child welfare system in recent years, and the Legislature continues to see the same problems resurface without adequate solutions or resolution. It may be easy to throw more money at the problems – that's often what happens in government, but more money alone will never solve the problems our child welfare system is facing. We need a group of dedicated, passionate legislators who will take a deep dive into these issues and work together to find consensus and bring bipartisan and bi-chamber legislation to resolve the challenges the agency can't fix on its own. It's time to pull the curtain back on the root causes and find lasting solutions for our child welfare system. In the end, this oversight committee isn't just taxed with fixing a struggling system. It's about protecting the present and the future for tens-of-thousands of vulnerable Kansas children. It is my hope that establishing this oversight committee will finally move the needle in the right direction and allow future legislators to solve the persistent problems with the child welfare system our body has addressed time and again in recent years.

In Service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel R. Hawkins".

Daniel Hawkins

House Majority Leader