



February 19, 2021

Representative Charles Smith
Kansas State Capital
300 W Ave
Topeka, KS 66612

Dear Representative Smith,

The Safehouse Crisis Center is a domestic violence and sexual assault program in Pittsburg, Kansas. Our mission is to provide quality services to victims of sexual assault and domestic violence; empower victims to live independently without the ongoing fear of violence; and to help victims secure resources necessary for a safe and healthy future.

Safehouse Crisis Center **supports the passage of HB2371**. The most important components of this bill to domestic and sexual violence victims in Kansas are:

- Removing the requirement to comply with child support enforcement in order to apply for SNAP and childcare assistance.
- Removing the minimum work requirement for adults attending private or public K-12 education or postsecondary institutions; and,
- Removing the lifetime limit for childcare assistance for adults attending postsecondary institutions (currently at 24 months).

When victims leave abusive relationships and seek independence, they often find the abuse escalates, creating substantial fear on the part of the victim, requiring intensive safety planning with a trained advocate. At the same time as the safety planning, the victim is most often facing a harsh reality put in place by the rules and regulations of the systems that purport to function as “assistance” or “help” for those facing the most difficult times of their lives. Many times, instead of help and assistance, victims are faced with compliance requirements that could jeopardize their safety (e.g., child support enforcement mechanisms) along with limitations on improving one’s education and training in hopes of obtaining a living wage and meaningful employment.



Domestic violence and sexual assault victims often need to rely on these safety net services during the time after leaving abusive partners and obtaining an employment opportunity that will allow for victims to properly, effectively, and sustainably care for themselves and/or their children.

Because these resources can be life-changing for so many victims of domestic and sexual violence, the Safehouse Crisis Center **strongly supports the passage of HB2371.**

Sincerely submitted,

Brooke Powell
Executive Director
Safehouse Crisis Center

