

State of Kansas



Jim Ward

House Democratic Leader

Chairman Hawkins:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. I rise in strong support of HB 2047.

The KanCare system is in crisis and in need of stronger oversight. The recent letter from CMS outlining the deficiencies with KanCare are strong evidence the legislature needs to take steps to strengthen oversight and accountability. The Office of Inspector General (OIG) is a tool already in statute that can provide some of this needed oversight.

The current OIG was established within K.S.A. 75-7427 with the authority to “establish a full-time program of audit, investigation and performance review to provide increased accountability, integrity and oversight of the state medicaid program, the state mediKan program and the state children's health insurance program within the jurisdiction of the department of health and environment and to assist in improving agency and program operations and in deterring and identifying fraud, waste, abuse and illegal acts.”

Inspectors general are accountable to the taxpayers. They are supposed to detect and prevent waste, fraud and abuse – and thereby, hopefully, build trust in government and ensure services are being provided in an accountable manner. The vulnerable Kansans who depend on these services deserve on less.

The key element of a properly created Inspector General is independence. In order to insure the OIG can properly investigate the services being provided it must be able to

provide its findings to a neutral third party and not a position that has hiring and firing controls of the OIG.

And originally, when the OIG was created, it did have the requisite independence.

When the Legislature created the OIG for Medicaid it was originally placed within the Kansas Policy Authority (KHPA) and reported to the KHPA Board and not the KHPA Executive Director. When Governor Brownback abolished the KHPA and moved it into KDHE it abolished the KHPA Board and had the OIG report directly to Secretary of KDHE.

HB 2047 simply brings the OIG back to what was intended when this body created the office in the first place and ensures the independence of the office to appropriately investigate KanCare to ensure services are being provided in an efficient and effective manner. Moving the OIG from KDHE to the Attorney General will create the necessary independence for the OIG to be an effective government program and help protect the people of Kansas.



Rep. Jim Ward

Minority Leader of the Kansas House