

Testimony
Sister Therese Bangert
Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth
Proponent SB 485
March 16, 2020

I am very sorry not to be here in person to give this testimony. As the third child of 12 and as an Aunt to 40 (and I am not getting into the Great-Grands 😊) the love of babies and their parents is deep in my spirit. I would have added to this testimony several editorial remarks.

- **TANF work requirements are not Changed with SB 485**
SB 485 simply gives DCF the latitude to add some protections and supports to a single parent who is on TANF. As I know DCF will explain, the current federal TANF rules of requiring work or participating in work activities 20 hours per week are not changed by this bill. Single parents are currently exempt from these work requirements for just over two months.
- **Accessibility and Affordability of Infant Child Care:**
Infant childcare is a challenge for any parents but especially challenging for anyone who has been on TANF. In 2016 the Economic Policy Institute (www.epi.org) found that the average for infant care in Kansas was \$933 a month. I recently heard that the going rate in Lawrence is \$350 a week. To me this is another reason to give DCF flexibility with TANF parents.
- **URGENCY of this Bill:**
Presently in our state, DCF is looking for every possible way to increase the bond between parents and vulnerable children and increase supportive measures, thus avoiding the tragedy of foster care, if possible.

As Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth our mission is to put our hands and hearts to the task of walking with people in poverty and changing the systems that contribute to poverty. I encourage you to support SB485 and to pass it in this 2020 Legislative Session.

Thank YOU for having this hearing. Thank you for listening to my testimony. Be well. I extend a Greeting of Peace and my continued promise of prayers.