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IMPROVING LIVES

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Children and Seniors Committee

Proponent Testimony on HB2149

February 2, 2021

Chairwoman Concannon
Members of the Committee

DCCCA has served Kansas communities, families, and children for the past 46 years. We provide child welfare programs including child placing agency and family preservation services. We are a behavioral health provider of mental health and substance use disorder treatment services. Additionally, we provide traffic safety, prevention, and research services. Our work across multiple systems highlights gaps and areas of potential collaboration and connection that could elevate care, services, and outcomes. We believe that HB2149 is important in addressing a system gap that prevents timely permanency for some Kansas children in foster care.

There are two specific areas of K.S.A 65-516 that I will mention today that create barriers to permanency for children. The first barrier is when an individual seeking to provide a kinship or foster care placement has been prohibited to become a licensed home. While we recognize the need for prohibited offenses, we also recognize there are circumstances when the discretion of the Secretary for Children and Families to grant a license could be in the best interest of a child in custody as long as it does not present a safety concern.

The second barrier is when a youth in a foster home, that had a juvenile offense, turns 18 years-of-age, and becomes prohibited from being in the very foster home that he or she was safely in the months or years prior to turning 18.

Both mentioned barriers can be addressed by passage of HB2149.

Thank you for this opportunity to share challenges this bill would address to reduce barriers to permanency for Kansas foster children.

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Questions may also be directed to:

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