



MOUNDRIDGE ***POLICE DEPARTMENT***

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Testimony in Support of SB 425

Provided by Captain Scott Zimmerman, Moundridge Police Department

Chair Richard Hilderbrand and the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of SB 425 which would require the Department of Children and Families (DCF) to disclose agency records of a child alleged or adjudicated to be a child in need of care.

I am testifying in support of SB 425 on behalf of the Kansas Police Officers Association and myself as the Captain assigned to Investigations for the Moundridge Police Department.

SB 425 directly addresses the short comings of current statutory language. DCF currently only shares limited information with law enforcement. DCF is currently screening reports and deciding which reports go to law enforcement. At the current time when law enforcement receives a report, there is often information which is redacted which is crucial to a proper investigation.

While it is impossible to know how many reports have been screened out by DCF and not reported to law enforcement, I have an example of how this is not beneficial to our communities. This will illustrate why all reports should be shared with law enforcement.

I received a call from a DCF employee. They were wanting to check the background of a particular family, to ensure they had not been a suspect of had any criminal case with our agency. During our conversation, the employee explained the investigation they had performed. I was told a child had been allegedly strangled, to the point their voice box was cut off and the child could not speak during the time the abuse was occurring.



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The employee went to the home, interviewed the child and parents, found nothing was suspicious and deemed the case unfounded.

This case should have been investigated by law enforcement first and foremost. The child should have been interviewed by a trained forensic investigator, who specializes in interviewing children who have been traumatized. The alleged perpetrator should be interviewed in a formal setting and more follow up should have been performed. By not interviewing this child in a forensic setting is completely unforgivable.

By not involving law enforcement from the beginning of the investigation, DCF will and has compromised the integrity of the investigation by losing valuable evidence and allowing the alleged perpetrator time to coach the victim on their responses to questions.

The delayed reporting and redacted reports provided by DCF in the past is unacceptable. The children and families deserve better service from those of us who watch over them. Had DCF contacted law enforcement from the beginning of many investigations, valuable time, evidence, and resources could have been saved.

There is absolutely no reason to not support SB 425. It will provide a better outcome of cases and help those who cannot always help themselves, primarily our children.

Thank you for your time.

Respectfully,

Scott M Zimmerman
Captain / Investigations