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Tammy Thomas
Kansas State Director – Safe Families for Children
Written-Only Testimony on HB 2811
House Committee on Appropriations

Chair Waymaster and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Nursesey Program for Incarcerated Moms (HB 2811). I have witnessed, with a support network in place, Moms can take the intentional and difficult steps to keep their child. It is not easy and they will fall down, but by placing a circle of support around them, to encourage, and believe them when they say, "... I want my baby.." These Mothers may have experienced or are experiencing homelessness, social isolation, substance abuse, incarceration, mental illness, or a combination of all the above. Safe Families for Children is a volunteer driven and professionally supported movement with the mission of Keeping Children Safe and Families together.

I know a mother in KC area that had lost 3 children to the foster care system due to issues mentioned earlier. She gave birth to her 4th child that was drug exposed during pregnancy. She begged to get to keep her little boy; DCF contacted Safe Families Intake Line and we identified a Host Family to care for the 2 day old baby boy while Mom was placed in appropriate facilities for rehabilitation. We also assigned a family friend to walk alongside Mom to encourage her, support her, and be a friend to someone that didn't have friends. The journey was not easy by any means, but Mom was determined. During this time, she kept full custody of her son, and was determined to be clean of drugs and the lifestyle that goes along with it. She did it! That Mom and her now 3.5 year old son are living independently in the Topeka area. She is clean, is employed, her son is healthy, and she holds tight to the motivation and drive to keep moving forward one day at a time. This story could have been very different, but this Mom had a drive to keep her son, and a volunteer circle of support to encourage her. We believe parents are capable of being the parent their children need them to be. We exist to keep children safe during a family challenge or crisis, support and stabilize families through the power of relationships. Safe Families for Children – Kansas completely supports moving HB 2811 forward.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this testimony with you today.

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