

To: House Committee on Appropriations
From: Michelle McCormick, Executive Director KCSDV
Re: Written-Only Proponent Testimony for HB 2811
Date: March 13, 2024

Chairperson Waymaster and Members of the Committee:

The Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence (KCSDV) is a nonprofit organization located in Topeka with 25 member organizations providing direct services to victims of sexual and domestic violence statewide. These are the programs that provide critical services to survivors 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and include emergency shelter, hotline support, counseling, and other supportive services.

KCSDV is a proponent of HB 2811, a bill that would establish a correctional center nursery at the Kansas Department of Corrections for expectant mothers to care and bond with their child for up to 36 months while incarcerated.

Research paints a clear picture that there is a pathway from being victimized to incarceration for women in the United States. One study found that 70-80% of incarcerated women reported experiencing intimate partner violence in their adult relationships prior to incarceration, while 60-70% experienced physical or sexual violence in childhood ((Dichter and Osthoff, 2015). The intersections of experiencing this trauma and the causes for incarceration cannot be ignored. During my career as a victim advocate, I can verify that this matches my experience as providing victim services to women at the Topeka Correctional Facility.

KCSDV supports this comprehensive bill that will make positive impacts on women and their children. We believe this program is one that has the chance to counteract impacts of trauma. The bill has measures that keep the safety and wellbeing of the child front and center while also giving the incarcerated mother resources for the best possible outcomes. The support and availability of resources including healthcare and wraparound services might be at their peak during the women's incarceration, allowing her to focus on building her life back and nurturing her young child. This is a commendable step to encourage connection and love within the family unit and unwinding generational trauma.

KCSDV respectfully requests the Committee support the passage of HB 2811.

Sincerely,



Michelle McCormick, LMSW
Executive Director
KCSDV