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Proponent Testimony on HB2194
House Child Welfare and Foster Care Committee
January 30, 2023

Chair Concannon, Vice Chair Johnson, Ranking Member Ousley, and Members of the Committee, my name is Kristalle Hedrick, Vice President of Kansas Programs with FosterAdopt Connect (FAC). FosterAdopt Connect is an agency rooted in advocacy for youth and families impacted by the child welfare system. As a non-profit built by foster and adoptive parents, we understand the unique needs of youth in foster care and the families caring for them. We work to ensure every child has a bright future in the home of a loving, safe, family. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB2194.

This bill comes at an excellent time, as we and other child welfare leaders across the state partner with the Annie E. Casey Foundation and young leaders with lived experience on the proposed SOUL Family permanency option to give additional resources to youth transitioning into adulthood. HB2194 guarantees protections for youth in foster care and affords an opportunity to raise up our youth's voices in their own journey towards safety and well-being.

Being a foster parent goes beyond providing food and shelter to children; caring for a child 24/7 creates an environment where we know a child and their current situation better than most. These rights are not about new privileges for foster parents, they represent the opportunity to advocate for the needs of youth in their home.

FosterAdopt Connect and many of the families we serve, appreciate the Committee's time and attention dedicated to HB2194 to raise up the voices of our youth and the families caring for them.

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