

January 24, 2024

Yusef Presley, Jr.

Written Testimony in Support of HB 2536

House Committee on Child Welfare and Foster Care

Chair Concannon, Ranking Member Ousely, and Esteemed Members of the House Committee on Child Welfare and Foster Care:

I extend my sincere gratitude for the opportunity to address this distinguished committee. My name is Yusef Presley Jr., and I am honored to share my firsthand experiences with the child welfare system, aiming to contribute valuable insights. Today, I express my unwavering support for HB 2536, which would create the SOUL Family Permanency Option.

With a background encompassing over 8 years in the Kansas care system, I bring a unique perspective on the challenges faced by youth in care. Reflecting on my journey, I have observed the diverse and often arduous experiences of foster youth. The SOUL Family Option, through its dynamic approach, emerges as a beacon of positive change for children in care.

Having moved from home to home, encountering less-than-favorable circumstances, I assert that Kansas consistently falls short in meeting the needs of our youth in care. Alarming statistics reveal that our youth in care are least likely to receive a proper education, most prone to experiencing homelessness, and more susceptible to involvement in criminal activities.

Foster youth in Kansas deserve better, and the foundation for improvement lies within HB 2536. This bill represents a crucial step towards providing the necessary support for our youth in care. It recognizes that it takes a village to raise children, and regrettably, many foster youth lack that village. HB 2536 aims to offer them peace of mind, stability, and, most importantly, a supportive community to rely on in their journey towards a better future.

I express my sincere gratitude for your time and dedication to this crucial matter. I wholeheartedly encourage each of you to cast your vote in favor of HB 2536.

Thank you sincerely,

Yusef Presley

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