



DCF Legislative Testimony

February 19, 2024

TESTIMONY OF: Stacy Tidwell, Deputy Director of Youth Programs, Department for Children and Families

TESTIMONY ON: House Bill 2189 - Granting jurisdiction to the court to extend custody of non-minor dependents to the secretary for children and families.

DCF | HOUSE BILL 2189 | NEUTRAL TESTIMONY

Chair Concannon and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 2189 which allows a young person, upon request to the court, to remain in DCF custody while receiving Independent Living (IL) services.

Offering young adults the opportunity to receive IL services while also receiving in custody supports as they complete their high school education, obtain employment skills, and receive advanced training or higher education increases their chances of lifelong success. Beyond the option to remain in custody, it is important that youth, who have left DCF Custody, also have the opportunity receive these intensive supports and services.

DCF would like to propose an amendment, which allows eligible young adults to request, in writing, reentry services from DCF without the need for court interaction. The most prominent change would be to be to strike the language on page 7, line 20 : “(3) Upon written request by the child to the court, the court shall not issue an order terminating jurisdiction over such child:” in favor of the following: “Eligible young adults may submit a written request to the department for children and families for reentry services from such department.” This allows young adults to receive the intensive supports and services without the necessity of Court interaction and allows them to receive such supports even if they have previously chosen to leave the Custody of the Secretary. See the full proposed language on page 4.

According to the Juvenile Law Center, 38 states including the District of Columbia that have state statutory provisions allowing for reentry into foster care. Many neighboring states allow for reentry, including Missouri, Nebraska, Iowa, and Arkansas.

In 2020 the Federal Consolidated Appropriations Act provisions and funding made it possible for DCF to allow eligible young people to receive services at the same level as those still in the custody of the secretary between April 23, 2021 and September 30th 2021. Interested young adults were able to request reentry services without court involvement through contact with independent living . DCF served 69 young adults across Kansas through reentry services. Many young adults achieved stability, began or completed educational programming, received substance use disorder services and mental health treatment. Without these services many of these young adults would have experienced homelessness.

In Kansas, during State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2023, 455 young adults transitioned out of foster care into adulthood. Currently, there are approximately 2,843 young adults aged 18 to less than 21 years of age who meet qualifications to request re-entry into services of DCF. DCF assumes that 10% of eligible young adults would request reentry services. The assumed costs are as follows:

	FY23
Est. # Re-Entry’s	284
Additional Case Mgrs. (@30 Cases per Month)	9
Additional Supervisors	6
Additional Administrator	1
Total Additional Staff	16
Salary + Fringe and OOE	\$1,234,901
<i>Avg 1,800 monthly Annualized</i>	\$6,140,880
<i>License Fees 800 per yr. for 40 staff</i>	\$32,000
Estimated Cost	\$7,407,781

HB 2189, as written, creates statutory provisions for continued services for Kansas youth through the court process. Utilizing a court-based process does not account for youth who have previously left care and requires young adults to specifically request extended care from the Court, which they may be uncomfortable or unwilling to do.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony on House Bill 2189. The intent of this bill helps the agency better serve vulnerable older youth as they transition to adulthood through providing the vital supports needed for success. DCF supports the proposed concept of this legislation but would ask the committee to amend language to forgo direct court involvement and allow the youth to work with DCF Staff to request re-entry services.

Child In Need of Care Code

K.S.A. 38-2202 Department for Children and Family Reentry Services for Young Adults Previously in Foster Care

- (a) Department for children and families shall provide reentry services to eligible young adults. Young adults shall be eligible for reentry services if they are 18 years or older and under the age of 21 years old, have previously been placed in in the custody of the secretary of department for children and families and in out of home placement on or after their 18th birthday. Eligible out of home placement shall not include placement at home with parent(s), juvenile detention facility, juvenile correctional facility, adult detention facility and adult correctional facility.
- (b) Eligible young adults may submit a written request to the department for children and families for reentry services from such department.
- (c) The young person receiving reentry services shall participate in self-sufficiency planning, attend school or work, and make efforts towards independence as determined by the department.
- (d) Reentry services shall terminate when the department determines the young adult fails to comply, the young adult voluntarily requests termination or when the young adult attains 21 years of age; whichever first occurs.
- (e) Provision of the department's Reentry Services for Youth Adults Previously in Foster Care is contingent upon funding.