

Written Only Testimony on HB2021

Submitted To

The Senate Committee on Judiciary

By

**Randy Bowman, Executive Director of Public Affairs
Kansas Department of Corrections**

March 8, 2023

The Kansas Department of Corrections (KDOC) appreciates the opportunity to offer a perspective on the proposed changes in House Bill 2021. We are neutral on the bill.

The Kansas Juvenile Justice System is seeing results as were envisioned eight years ago by leaders of the executive, judicial and legislative branches of government when they established a bipartisan, inter-branch Juvenile Justice Workgroup to comprehensively examine Kansas' juvenile justice system and to develop data-driven policies based upon research and to build consensus among key stakeholders from across our state. That leadership charge sought to advance these three goals:

- Promote public safety and hold juvenile offenders accountable;
- Control taxpayer costs; and
- Improve outcomes for youth, families, and communities in Kansas.

The major findings from that work in 2015 included:

- **As crime falls, the juvenile justice system does not keep pace:** From 2004-2013, the decline in the KDOC out of home population (24 percent) was less than half the decline in the rate of juvenile arrests (52 percent).
- **Lower-level offenders make up most of juvenile justice system:** The vast majority of youth placed in state-funded residential facilities and under the most intensive level of community supervision are not chronic offenders adjudicated for serious offenses. Rather, youth with lower-level offenses and limited criminal histories make up a large proportion of the population placed out of home in state custody under Case Management, as well as on Intensive Supervision Probation (ISP).
- **Bed costs are high:** More than two-thirds (over \$53 million) of KDOC's juvenile services budget is spent on out-of-home placements at a cost of as much as \$89,000 per year per youth. That is more than 10 times the cost of probation.
- **Evidence-based services in the community are scarce:** The courts lack sufficient evidence-based alternatives to residential placement. The services that are available in the community are

the same as those available to any non-court-involved youth, are generally not shown to reduce recidivism, and are not monitored for quality by the juvenile justice system.

- **Lack of standardization leads to disparate outcomes:** Throughout the system, decisions about how to handle youth are made without statutory guidance or standardized assessment of a youth's risks and criminogenic needs, leading to geographically disparate use of out-of-home placements.
- **Data collection is insufficient and inconsistent:** A lack of comprehensive outcome data collection impedes the accountability necessary to incentivize better system performance.

Over the past several years, stakeholders from across Kansas have worked to implement the reforms enacted in 2016 Senate Bill 367 and have improved public safety and outcomes for youth and families across Kansas.

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Section 4 proposes to double the total number of post adjudication days that a youth could be confined in juvenile detention as violation of a condition of sentence from 45 to 90 days. I am aware of no evidence that supports this approach as effective in reducing juvenile crime or changing behavior, rather the research is extensive as to the harm caused by confinement.

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Written Only Testimony on HB2021

Submitted To

The Senate Committee on Judiciary

By

**Randy Bowman, Executive Director of Public Affairs
Kansas Department of Corrections**

March 8, 2023

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- Promote public safety and hold juvenile offenders accountable;
- Control taxpayer costs; and
- Improve outcomes for youth, families, and communities in Kansas.

The major findings from that work in 2015 included:

- **As crime falls, the juvenile justice system does not keep pace:** From 2004-2013, the decline in the KDOC out of home population (24 percent) was less than half the decline in the rate of juvenile arrests (52 percent).
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the same as those available to any non-court-involved youth, are generally not shown to reduce recidivism, and are not monitored for quality by the juvenile justice system.

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