

Approved: March 15, 2012

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(February 21, 2012)

## MINUTES OF THE HOUSE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Mike Kiegerl at 9:12 AM on Tuesday, February 21, 2012, in Room 142-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Representative McCray-Miller - Excused

Committee staff present:

June Christensen, Committee Assistant

Renae Jefferies, Office of the Kansas Revisor of Statutes

Martha Dorsey, Kansas Legislative Research Department

Jay Hall, Kansas Legislative Research Department

Conferees appearing before the Committee:

*Proponents:*

Representative Connie O'Brien

Jennifer Laporte, Parental Rights Organization

Others in attendance:

See attached list.

Chairperson Kiegerl opened the hearing on **HR 6009 – urging Congress to adopt the parental rights amendment.**

Chairperson Kiegerl introduced Ms. Renae Jefferies, Office of the Kansas Revisor of Statutes, to brief the committee on **HR 6009**. Ms Jefferies reviewed the resolution, which would urge the United States Congress to adopt the parental rights amendment, a joint resolution in Congress that is proposing to amend the U. S. Constitution relative to parents' rights. (Attachment 1).

Chairperson Kiegerl introduced Representative Connie O'Brien, who supports the proposed resolution, saying it was written to make the Kansas Congressional delegation aware of a treaty that is being presented to the United Nations regarding the rights of children. She said that parental rights are important to families, and this will help protect families from government involvement, particularly as a part of the proposed United Nations treaty. (Attachment 2).

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Chairperson Kiegerl introduced Jennifer Laporte, parent and volunteer with Parental Rights Organization, who spoke in support of the proposed resolution. She said she believed the resolution would serve to protect the fundamental liberty of parents to direct and control the upbringing of their children and would not allow other states or the proposed United Nations treaty to be involved in the process of child-rearing. She said she believed children are properly protected by the present state and federal court systems and that most Kansas parents are responsible in how they choose to raise their children. She presented examples of children who have been removed from the parents' home over minor issues, some based on complaints of the children. She noted there is no perfect parent or perfect child, but parents who are caring are making the proper decisions for raising their children and should not have outside interference. She urged passage of the proposed resolution. (Attachment 3).

Chairperson Kiegerl questioned if there were any further conferees, either in opposition or neutral, and there were none. Since there are to be no more meetings to consider this bill, he requested a motion to address the proposed resolution.

*Representative Brunk moved, and Representative Meigs seconded the motion to favorably pass proposed Resolution 6009 out of committee*

Discussion followed. Representatives Roth and Rubin said they would not be able to support the proposed resolution to amend the Constitution based on not knowing what the United Nations resolution would be or what would happen with it; that the court system would be able to protect the fundamental rights of parents; and that current laws are sufficient to do this. Representative Roth said there should be more time to consider the issue.

Representatives Brunk, Gregory, and Meigs said they would support the bill based on the best interest of family units, a message to Congress letting them know it is important, and support for United States' laws as opposed to those of other countries.

Chairperson Kiegerl said the committee was ready for the vote.

*The motion failed, four to three, Representatives Gatewood, Roth, Rubin and Wolf opposed, Representative McCray Miller absent.*

Chairperson Kiegerl expressed appreciation for committee members' service and informed the committee that **HB 2444 – Grades K-12; use of seclusion and restraint of students with**

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**disabilities; reporting thereof**, will be voted on today. He asked for the committee's support. Other bills that passed from this committee that were assigned to other committees are grandparents' rights bills; **HB 2542 - Citizen review boards; powers and duties; appointment of members; and HB 2538 - children in need of care, reimbursement of cost of care for a child in a grandparent's custody**, to come from the Appropriations Committee. The Social Services Budget committee is working on the autism waiting list of 245 children with a proposed budget of \$7 million dollars, and he has been assured that the Governor's office will support elimination of this waiting list. The bill for insurance for autistic children passed last year for state employees only, but he said it is important that this be put in place for all children and hoped for the committee's support.

Chairperson Kiegerl expressed appreciation for committee assistants' support and presented flowers to Ms. Jefferies, Ms. Dorsey, Mr. Hall, and Ms. Christensen. He noted that it had been a successful session with a lot of work, and it will be very busy for the next few weeks. He said he hoped the autism waiting list could be taken care of this year, which is one of his primary goals. There may be some other issues referred back to the committee later.

Any future meetings will be on the call of the Chair.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.