

Phyllis Gilmore, Secretary

Sam Brownback, Governor

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Testimony of:

Gina Meier-Hummel, Director of Prevention and Protection Services
Department for Children and Families
Topeka, Kansas

Presented to:

The Hon. Jeff King and Honorable Members
of the Kansas Senate Judiciary Committee:

DCF written testimony on SB 19

Chairman King, Vice-Chair Smith, Ranking Member Haley and Honored Members:

I am Gina Meier-Hummel, Director of Prevention and Protection Services with the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF). Our division is responsible for the Kansas Protection Report Center (KPRC) and Adult and Protective Services (APS). Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 19.

Senate Bill 19 amends mistreatment of a dependent. Currently, mistreatment of a dependent adult involves taking unfair advantage of a dependent adult's physical or financial resources by means of undue influence, coercion, harassment or other deceptive actions. SB 19 defines the term *undue influence* to include the improper use of the responsible adult's fiduciary authority, such as power of attorney, durable power of attorney, guardianship, conservatorship, or trust. Further, SB 19 adds misappropriation of or taking unfair advantage of a dependent adult, and includes money in a personal or joint account. The amendments will strengthen DCF's ability to work with law enforcement and financial institutions.

DCF supports SB 19 because it serves to further protect vulnerable adults. Strengthening the law for mistreatment of a dependent adult may increase the number of abused adults served in the Adult Protective Services Program, however the extent of the increase cannot be estimated. DCF assumes that any additional costs arising from this bill can be absorbed within the existing budget and supports the provisions identified in SB 19.

Thank you.

**Gina Meier-Hummel, Director
DCF Prevention and Protection Services**

