

November 16, 2016

Kansas Special Committee on Foster Care Adequacy

Dear Chairman Knox and Committee Members:

In concern for foster parents, I bring a grievance for your attention. I've learned that all across our state, Citizen's Review Boards are being shuttered for lack of funding and feel that foster care parents are losing a valuable resource, especially in our Sedgwick county courts. .

A Citizen Review Board (CRB) is comprised of community volunteers who are appointed by the administrative judge of a judicial district to review the status of cases involving children in the child welfare or juvenile justice system. Each CRB is made up of no less than three members and no more than seven members.

The duties and responsibilities of a CRB volunteer are set out in K. S. A. 38-2208. A CRB shall:

- review cases, receive verbal information from all parties with pertinent information about the cases, and access information in the court's case file,
- determine the progress which has been made to acquire a permanent home for the children,
- suggest alternative goals for the cases, if progress is insufficient, and
- make recommendations to the presiding judge regarding further actions on the cases.

With concern for the Sedgwick county CRB, please note the enclosed letter from Ms. Freed. These dollars were sent to CASA of Sedgwick county and after the loss of these funds, our Sedgwick county courts lost their CRB. CRB's can help process juvenile and CINC cases faster, while strengthening judicial oversight. From Ms.Freed's letter, the Kansas DCF made an annual grant of \$79,000, but I fear that it will take twice the amount for CASA of Sedgwick county to restore their CRB, so that these volunteers can cover truancy and CINC cases.

Having a CRB is paramount in support of these families whom graciously open their homes for children in crisis. Foster care parents are invited to attend CRB meetings, alongside broken families, case managers, DCF workers and attorneys, so that they are empowered with information that might best serve the child in need of care. I humbly ask of you and committee members to restore funding for this resource in our Sedgwick county courts and thank you.

Sincerely,

Keri Strahler
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Phyllis Gilmore, Secretary

Sam Brownback, Governor

January 7, 2016

Keri Strahler
keri.strahler@gmail.com

Ms. Strahler,

I am writing in response to your question to the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF), received on December 14, 2015, inquiring about any existing grant from DCF to CASA of Sedgwick County for their Truancy Citizen's Review Board.

The grant provided to CASA of Sedgwick County was for \$79,000, but ended on June 30, 2015. The CASA/Roots & Wings program was funded with other State Special Grants, which was 100% SGF. Due to budgetary restraints, DCF was unable to renew the grant for Fiscal Year 2016. DCF values the efforts of CASA and hopes they can secure funds from other sources for Fiscal Year 2016.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Theresa Freed".

Theresa Freed
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Strong Families Make A Strong Kansas