

My grandson is Adrian Jones. Adrian was abused, tortured and starved to death by his father and stepmother in 2015. Today I would like to speak about the need for a Children's Ombudsman Office in the State of Kansas. Currently approximately 22 states have established an Ombudsman Office with duties and purposes specifically related to children's services. Another five states have a statewide Ombudsman program, which address the concerns of all governmental agencies, including children's services. Nine states have related Ombudsman services, program specific services, or county run programs. In so many cases, people have stated they called DCF with their concerns regarding the welfare of a child, and did not get anywhere. The need for an Ombudsman in Kansas would serve a vital need to our children by placing another set of eyes on them, and would give citizens a place where they can call with their concerns regarding the welfare of any child in DCF care. As you are aware, DCF is responsible for providing services to or caring for children who are victims of child abuse and neglect. Unfortunately, they have allowed too many children to slip through the cracks, and some of those children have paid with their lives, this has to stop. The Ombudsman office would need to act independently from divisions responsible for child welfare. Currently we have a child death review board, but it is not independent, and they do not have the ability to step in and request a living child's file to see if DCF is following protocol. I stand before you today because I truly feel if we had an Ombudsman Office who works independently with the right to check into a file, that Adrian's life could have been saved.

Respectfully,

Judy Conway