

PROPONENT TESTIMONY OF PHILLIP COSBY  
AMERICAN FAMILY ACTION of KANSAS and MISSOURI, February 2019

PROPONENT: SB 77, "Child with Problem of Sexual Behavior"

As used in this section, "**child with problem sexual behavior**" means a child under 18 years of age who has allegedly committed sexual abuse against another child.

*It is easier to mend an injured boy than to fix a broken man... A stitch in time...*

For sixteen years I have focused the issue of the harms of pornography and the hyper sexualized culture. I have interacted with parents, students, lawmakers, the courts, law enforcement, media, churches and clinicians to address a tsunami of harms.

Daily we wake to news of sexual assaults. K-12, university campuses, Hollywood celebrities, Olympic guardians, business leaders, pastors and entrusted public servants are a few of the fallen. Fifteen years ago, denial in most institutions was the norm. Denial has now given way to head shaking, anger or a numbing resignation as to what can be done?

The correlating reality of increasing child on child sexual harm is almost too painful to contemplate. Last year the KS Dept. of Children and Families identified 433 cases that fit this scenario of child on child sexual assault. Foster care transfers of children due to inappropriate sexual activity are disturbing. Task force findings from other states are too shockingly graphic to relate. Hoping that it will all go away will only result in more of the same. A bill has been introduced in the House Tax cmte. providing a paygo solution.

1. Referencing the ABC news report : **Child-On-Child Sexual Abuse Bigger Problem Than Thought in Missouri : "While experts had believed the number of cases this would affect each year was about 600, the first five months under the new law brought almost 2,000.**

2. Referencing the booklet : "*Do Children Sexually Abuse Other Children?*"

- Over 1/3 of all sexual abuse of children is committed by someone under 18.
- Discerning natural sexual curiosity and potential abusive behavior.
- Insure that children involved in a harmful sexual situation, whatever their role, are given help to live healthy lives.

What is Healthy Sexual Development? ; What is Age Appropriate? ; What is Sexually Harmful Behavior? ; Why Do Some Children Harm Others? ; How Do You Recognize the Warning Signs? ; Why Don't Children Tell? ; How Can We Protect Our Children?

A quick search beyond Missouri shows other states that have similar statutes and have implemented focused task forces to address this problem (FL, TN, ND, SD, MT, UT, MI, AL, IA, WV, DE...) Countries such as Iceland, Australia and the United Kingdom have aggressively implemented nation wide remedies.

This bill reflects a spirit of painful transparency and a sunshine remedy that resonates with the Resolve of the **2017 Kansas House and 2018 Senate Resolutions on Pornography, A Public Health Crisis**. "*Be it further resolved: That we recognize the need for additional education, prevention, research, and policy change at the community level and societal levels, and we urge this chamber and other governing bodies to take appropriate steps to ensure progress is made*"... further promoting the general welfare of our great state of Kansas. We need to know, we must respond!

Phillip Cosby, Director, 785-571-7214

## **Child-on-child sexual abuse bigger problem than thought in Missouri** Joe McLean ABC 17 news, Aug 2016 New law aimed at battling problem behaviors in children

Jefferson City, Mo. - Child-against-child sexual abuse is more common in Missouri than experts had previously believed, according to state officials. Five months ago, Senate Bill 341 went into effect requiring all complaints of children with problem sexual behaviors to be assessed by the state. Before the new law, there was no statewide procedure for handling the problem. "They would not take those calls," said Emily van Schenkhof with Missouri KidsFirst. "So, calls would either be referred to the juvenile office, they'd be referred to law enforcement, (or) often nothing would happen with these because they were very young kids. **Now, the Missouri Department of Social Services must work with an assessment service such as Missouri KidsFirst to perform a follow-up assessment.**" These are not situations that most families know how to deal with," said Schenkhof, "They're very complicated for both the victim family and for the family of the child that is perpetrating the behaviors. **While experts had believed the number of cases this would affect each year was about 600, the first five months under the new law brought almost 2,000.**" ABC 17 News spoke to a mother who experienced this problem firsthand. "I was mortified, sad, scared, angry ... pretty much all the emotions you can feel wrapped up in one solid moment," said the mother. "You go into defense mode and take care of your baby and that's what we did." Advocates say approaching and fixing these problem sexual behaviors in young children is important. "Unfortunately, **what we have done as a society is only have a back-end response and only deal with sex offenders when they are 35, when they are 40 when they are 50,**" said van Schenkhof. **"At that point their behaviors are very well ingrained and we can't change them."** More than 7,000 men and women have served prison time in Missouri for sex crimes in the last decade. The most common offense is first-degree child molestation. We've been in contact with the Department of Social Services, for the past six weeks about this story. Despite frequent requests for an interview, D.S.S. officials would not grant us one. **If you know of a victim of child sexual abuse, call the Child Abuse & Neglect Hotline: (800)392-3738**