



January 20, 2021

House Corrections and Juvenile Justice Committee
Testimony Neutral on House Bill 2026

Chairman Jennings and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. I am Stuart Little, President of the Behavioral Health Association of Kansas (BHAK), the State's trade organization dedicated solely to substance use disorders treatment and prevention providers seeking integrated behavioral health care. BHAK believes that true integrated behavioral health means access and funding for mental illness and substance use disorder treatment without regard to where our consumers seek services in the publicly funded behavioral health system.

We support the Senate Bill 123 treatment program and would support House Bill 2026 to make the benefits of Senate Bill 123 treatment available as a diversion option. However, as we testified previously, the State should not add participants to the Senate Bill 123 without funding to serve the expansion. The fiscal note anticipates, conservatively I believe, increases annually between \$88,000 and \$265,000.

Thank you very much for the funding that was added in 2019, for the first time ever, to cover the costs of adding new offenders and to increase rates that had not increased in many years. We have customarily appeared to remind policy makers about the need to fund the program. There is a limited capacity to cover participants. Overall funding had declined from over \$8.0 million to close to \$6.0 million until the 2019 increase.

House Bill 2026 is symbolic of the great success of the Senate Bill 123 treatment instead of incarceration policy set twenty years ago. Expansion of the program as a diversion only works well when it is accompanied by expended funding to treat those criminally convicted or we put the program at risk, especially as we have just begun to make restorative increases.

We will raise the funding issue with the appropriate funding committees.

I am happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.

Stuart J. Little, Ph.D., President
Behavioral Health Association of Kansas
<https://www.bhakansas.com>
stuartjlittle@mac.com