



Proponent Testimony on HB 2557 – Written Only
House Committee on Judiciary
February 7, 2022

Chair Patton, Vice Chair Ralph, Ranking Member Carmichael and Members of the Committee, my name is Rachel Marsh, CEO of the Children's Alliance of Kansas. The Alliance is an association of 22 private, non-profit child welfare agencies that collectively provide a full array of services for children and families in child abuse and neglect prevention, family preservation, foster care, adoption, independent living, and parent, youth, and child skill-building, mental health, and substance use treatment.

The Children's Alliance supports HB 2557, which prohibits the denial of a petition for expungement of a juvenile offense due to the petitioner's inability to pay outstanding costs, fees, fines, or restitution and authorizes expungement if the juvenile has not committed an offense in the previous two years. HB 2557 provides an opportunity for youth to pursue a fresh start beyond a juvenile adjudication label. By eliminating any potential financial constraints, the court may appropriately determine if the circumstances and behavior of the youth warrant expungement. Additionally, authorizing expungement for a youth who has not committed an offense in the previous two years serves as an incentive for youth to build pro-social and more adaptive behaviors. For child welfare providers serving many youth who are referred after contact with the juvenile justice system, HB 2557 will provide another tool for workers and foster parents to support and encourage youth to overcome barriers and challenges in their lives.

HB 2557 is a positive step forward in Kansas ongoing juvenile justice reform efforts to create policies that recognize the importance of effective responses to juvenile behavior problems.

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Members of the Children's Alliance of Kansas:

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| The Bridge of Topeka, Topeka | Kansas Children's Service League, Topeka |
| CALM, Emporia | KVC Kansas, Olathe |
| Cornerstones of Care, Overland Park | KidsTLC, Olathe |
| DCCCA, Lawrence | Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation, Mayetta |
| Eckerd, Wichita | Restoration Family Services, Wichita |
| EmberHope, Wichita | Saint Francis Ministries, Salina |
| Florence Crittenton, Topeka | TFI Family Services, Topeka |
| FosterAdopt Connect, Olathe | The Children's Shelter, Lawrence |
| Foster the Cause, Topeka | The Villages, Topeka |
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