



House Committee on Judiciary

March 9, 2016

Testimony on:

SB 408

Written Testimony by:

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Testimony of:

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Chair Barker, Vice Chair Macheers, Ranking Member Carmichael and Members of the Committee:

I am Kathy Armstrong, Assistant Director for Legal Services, Prevention and Protection Services, Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF). Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony regarding Senate Bill 408.

K.S.A. 75-723 created the abuse, neglect and exploitation unit (ANE Unit) in the office of the Attorney General in 2006. SB 408 amends a number of provisions in the statute. Current statute 38-2226 requires joint investigations between DCF and an “appropriate” law enforcement agency or agencies in specified types of abuse or neglect cases. Such investigations are generally conducted with local law enforcement that will contact other law enforcement agencies if deemed necessary and appropriate. Historically, DCF was to forward all substantiated findings of abuse and neglect and exploitation to the Attorney General’s ANE Unit. Historically and pursuant to existing statute, the ANE Unit has not been involved in DCF’s investigations of abuse and neglect allegations, which resulted in a finding decision unless the situation fell within the parameter of statutory or policy required involvement of law enforcement. Any substantiated finding decision results in the name of the perpetrator of abuse and/or neglect being placed on the Kansas Child Abuse/Neglect Central Registry (if a child was the victim) or the Adult Registry (if an adult was the victim).

DCF supports the proposed language to establish the abuse, neglect or exploitation of adults who are “senior citizens, disabled or otherwise vulnerable” as a priority of the ANE Unit. Focusing the scope of the unit aligns well with the reason the unit was created and will help assist vulnerable adults in Kansas. Sec. 3 (b)(4) provides for the unit to “coordinate with and assist with medicaid fraud and abuse division” of the Office of the Attorney General in the “prevention, detection and investigation of abuse, neglect and exploitation of persons.” This could provide valuable assistance and support for some persons who come into contact with DCF.

DCF is in support of SB 408. Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony before the Committee today. I am glad to take questions.