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**HOUSE BILL No. 2449**

By Representatives Crow, Barnes, Findley, Loganbill, O'Brien, Phelps,  
Showalter and Toelkes

2-7

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AN ACT concerning children; establishing a children's advocate; provid-  
ing for powers, duties and functions thereof.

*Be it enacted by the Legislature of the State of Kansas:*

Section 1. This act shall be known and cited as the children's advo-  
cate act.

Sec. 2. As used in this act:

(a) "Administrative act" means an action, omission, decision, recom-  
mendation, practice or other procedure of the department of social and  
rehabilitation services related to foster care services and services provided  
by the Kansas payment center as established by subsection (m) of section  
20 of chapter 183 of the 2000 Session Laws of Kansas.

(b) "Advocate" means the children's advocate or any individual des-  
ignated as an advocate who has received the training required under sub-  
section (f) of section 6, and amendments thereto, and who has been des-  
ignated by the children's advocate to carry out the powers, duties and  
functions of the office of the children's advocate.

(c) "Child" means a person who is less than 19 years of age.

(d) "Conflict of interest" means (1) having a pecuniary or other in-  
terest in a child placement agency, child care resource and referral agency  
or child care facility; and (2) being actively employed or otherwise having  
active involvement in representation of or advocacy for any child place-  
ment agency, child care resource and referral agency or child care facility,  
whether or not such representation or advocacy is individual or through  
an association or other entity.

(e) "Family foster home" means a private home in which care is given  
for 24 hours a day for a small number of children away from their parent  
or guardian and which is licensed under K.A.R. 28-4-311 *et seq.* and shall  
not include a family day care home as defined in K.S.A. 65-517, and  
amendments thereto.

(f) "Foster child" means a child under 16 years of age who is living  
away from such child's parent or guardian with persons who are neither  
such child's relative nor legal guardian.

(g) "Kansas payment center" means the central unit for the collection

1 and disbursement of support payments established in subsection (m) of  
2 section 20 of chapter 183 of the 2000 Session Laws of Kansas.

3 (h) "Office" means the office of the children's advocate.

4 (i) "Person" means any individual, association, partnership, corpora-  
5 tion, government, governmental subdivision or other entity.

6 (j) "Volunteer advocate" means an individual who has satisfactorily  
7 completed the training prescribed by the children's advocate under sec-  
8 tion 6, and amendments thereto, who is a volunteer assisting in providing  
9 advocate services and who receives no payment for such service other  
10 than reimbursement for expenses incurred in accordance with guidelines  
11 adopted therefor by the children's advocate.

12 Sec. 3. (a) There is hereby established the office of children's advoca-  
13 cate within the legislative branch of government. The advocate shall be  
14 elected by a  $\frac{2}{3}$  vote in each house of the legislature. The office of chil-  
15 dren's advocate shall be under the direct supervision of the legislative  
16 coordinating council.

17 (b) The children's advocate shall serve for a term of two years and  
18 until such advocate's successor is appointed and qualified. Such advocate  
19 may be reappointed for additional terms. The initial children's advocate  
20 shall be appointed to serve until the January 2003 session during which  
21 the first two-year term children's advocate shall be appointed with sub-  
22 sequent appointments being made every two years.

23 (c) The legislature by a  $\frac{2}{3}$  vote in each house may remove the chil-  
24 dren's advocate from office but only for mental or physical incapacity to  
25 perform the duties of the office or other grounds sufficient for removal  
26 of a judge from state court. If the position of children's advocate becomes  
27 vacant for some reason, the deputy children's advocate shall serve as act-  
28 ing children's advocate until a children's advocate is appointed and  
29 qualified.

30 Sec. 4. (a) No person shall be eligible to be appointed to or to hold,  
31 the office of children's advocate if such person is subject to a conflict of  
32 interest. No person shall be eligible for appointment as children's advoca-  
33 cate unless such person has:

34 (1) A baccalaureate or higher degree from an accredited college or  
35 university;

36 (2) demonstrated abilities to analyze problems of law, administration  
37 and public policy; and

38 (3) experience in investigation and conflict resolution procedures.

39 (b) The children's advocate shall administer the office of the chil-  
40 dren's advocate in accordance with the provisions of this act.

41 (c) Upon appointment as children's advocate, such advocate shall se-  
42 lect and appoint a person as deputy children's advocate.

43 (d) The children's advocate may delegate to staff members any au-

1 thory, power or duty except this power of delegation and such children's  
2 advocate's duty to make any report to the legislature or governor under  
3 this act. However, the children's advocate may authorize the deputy chil-  
4 dren's advocate to act in the children's advocate's stead in the event of  
5 illness, absence, leave or disability or when, in the children's advocate's  
6 sole discretion, an appearance of impropriety or partiality or a conflict of  
7 interest prevents such advocate from discharging such advocate's duty in  
8 a particular matter.

9 (e) The office of the children's advocate shall oversee and investigate  
10 complaints regarding foster care of children in the custody of the state  
11 and complaints regarding the Kansas payment center, as defined in sec-  
12 tion 2, and amendments thereto, and shall perform such other duties as  
13 may be provided.

14 Sec. 5. (a) Employees in the office of children's advocate shall be in  
15 the unclassified service, shall receive such compensation as is provided  
16 under this act and shall be covered by the state group health plan and  
17 Kansas public employees retirement system to the same extent as other  
18 state employees. Employees of the office of children's advocate shall re-  
19 ceive travel expenses and subsistence expenses and allowances as pro-  
20 vided for other state employees.

21 (b) Employees in the office of children's advocate shall be employed  
22 by and be responsible to the children's advocate who shall fix the com-  
23 pensation of each employee subject to the approval of the legislative co-  
24 ordinating council and within budget and appropriations therefor. The  
25 annual budget request of the office shall be prepared by the children's  
26 advocate and presented to the legislative coordinating council. Such coun-  
27 cil shall make any changes it desires in the budget request and upon  
28 approval of the budget request by the council, the children's advocate  
29 shall submit such budget to the director of the budget as other budget  
30 requests are submitted.

31 (c) All officers and employees of the office of children's advocate shall  
32 serve at the pleasure of the children's advocate.

33 Sec. 6. The children's advocate shall:

34 (a) Establish procedures for receiving and processing complaints from  
35 complainants, conducting investigations, holding hearings and reporting  
36 findings resulting from investigation;

37 (b) investigate and resolve complaints made by or on behalf of a foster  
38 child relating to action, inaction or decisions of the foster home or an  
39 administrative act of an agency, without regard to the finality of the act;

40 (c) develop continuing programs to inform children, their family  
41 members or other persons of the rights and responsibilities of the child,  
42 family members or other persons regarding such foster children and the  
43 Kansas payment center;

1 (d) provide the legislature and the governor with an annual report  
2 containing data, findings and outcomes regarding the types of problems  
3 experienced and complaints received by or on behalf of foster children,  
4 person's sending or receiving support checks through the Kansas payment  
5 center and containing policy, regulatory and legislative recommendations  
6 to solve such problems, resolve such complaints and improve the quality  
7 of care and life of a foster child when placed under the state's care and  
8 shall present such report and other appropriate information and recom-  
9 mendations to the senate committee on public health and welfare, the  
10 senate committee on ways and means, the house of representatives com-  
11 mittee on health and human services and the house of representatives  
12 committee on appropriations during each regular session of the  
13 legislature;

14 (e) analyze and monitor the development and implementation of fed-  
15 eral, state and local government laws, rules and regulations, resolutions,  
16 ordinances and policies with respect to foster children in the care of the  
17 state, payments processed through the Kansas payment center and serv-  
18 ices provided in this state, and recommend any changes in such laws,  
19 rules and regulations, resolutions, ordinances and policies deemed by the  
20 office to be appropriate;

21 (f) prescribe and provide for the training of each children's advocate  
22 and any individual designated as an avocate under subsection (h) of this  
23 section, and any individual who is an advocate volunteer in (1) federal,  
24 state and local laws, rules and regulations, resolutions, ordinances and  
25 policies with respect to foster children and the Kansas payment center in  
26 Kansas, (2) investigative techniques, and (3) such other matters as the  
27 state children's advocate deems appropriate;

28 (h) authorize an individual, who is an employee of the office and who  
29 has satisfactorily completed the training prescribed by the children's ad-  
30 vocate under subsection (g), to be an advocate or a volunteer advocate  
31 and to be a representative of the office and such an authorized individual  
32 shall be deemed to be a representative of the office for the purposes of  
33 and subject to the provisions of the children's advocate act;

34 (i) establish and maintain a system to recruit and train individuals to  
35 become volunteer advocates;

36 (j) develop and implement procedures for authorizing and for with-  
37 drawing the authorization of individuals to be advocates or volunteer ad-  
38 vocates to represent the office in providing advocate services;

39 (k) provide services to foster children in the care of the state and  
40 persons seeking services regarding the Kansas payment center throughout  
41 the state directly or through service providers to meet needs for advocate  
42 services;

43 (1) collaborate with the department of health and environment and

1 the department of social and rehabilitation services to establish a state-  
2 wide system to collect and analyze information on complaints about the  
3 state foster care system or the Kansas payment center;

4 (m) undertake, participate in or cooperate with persons and agencies  
5 in such conferences, inquiries, meetings or studies which might improve  
6 the functioning of agencies regarding state foster care and the Kansas  
7 payment center or lessen the risks that objectionable administrative acts  
8 will occur;

9 (n) have access to and examine and copy, without payment of a fee,  
10 any agency records, including records that are confidential by state law;

11 (o) enter and inspect the premises of any agency, including the Kan-  
12 sas payment center, and foster care home or facility;

13 (p) subpoena any person to appear, to give sworn testimony or to  
14 produce documentary or other evidence that is reasonably relevant to the  
15 matters under investigation;

16 (q) maintain confidentiality regarding any matter related to com-  
17 plaints and investigations, including the identities of the complaints and  
18 witnesses, except as the children's advocate deems necessary to fulfill the  
19 duties of such advocate's office;

20 (r) adopt, promulgate, amend and rescind rules and regulations re-  
21 quired for the discharge of the office of children's advocate's duties; and

22 (s) perform such other duties and functions as may be provided.

23 Sec. 7. For the purposes of carrying out the powers and duties of the  
24 office of the children's advocate, such advocate may request and accept  
25 a grant or donation from any person, firm, association or corporation or  
26 from any federal, state or local governmental agency and may enter into  
27 contracts or other transactions with any such person or entity in connec-  
28 tion with the grant or donation.

29 Sec. 8. Upon receipt of a complaint or on its own initiative, the ad-  
30 vocate may:

31 (a) Investigate an administrative act that is alleged to be contrary to  
32 law, rules and regulations, policy of a foster care home or Kansas payment  
33 center, imposed without an adequate statement of reason or based on  
34 irrelevant, immaterial or erroneous grounds;

35 (b) decide, in its discretion, whether to investigate a complaint;

36 (c) conduct a preliminary investigation to determine whether the fos-  
37 ter care home or the Kansas payment center may have committed an act  
38 that is alleged to be contrary to law; and

39 (d) hold informal hearings and request that persons appear before  
40 the advocate and give testimony or produce documentary or other evi-  
41 dence the advocate considers relevant to the matter under investigation.

42 Sec. 9. (a) Upon rendering a decision to investigate a complaint the  
43 advocate shall notify the complainant of the decision to investigate and

1 shall notify the state foster care home or the Kansas payment center and  
2 any other pertinent state entity referred to in the complaint and the de-  
3 cision to investigate the matter. If the advocate declines to investigate a  
4 complaint or continue an investigation, the advocate shall notify the com-  
5 plainant and the other person involved in the decision and the reasons  
6 for the decision.

7 (b) The advocate may advise a complainant to pursue all administra-  
8 tive remedies or channels of complaint open to the complainant before  
9 pursuing a complaint with the advocate's office. Subsequent to the ad-  
10 ministrative processing of a complaint, the advocate may conduct further  
11 investigations of any complaint upon the request of the complainant or  
12 on the advocate's own initiative.

13 (c) If the advocate finds in the course of an investigation that a per-  
14 son's action is in violation of state or federal criminal law, the advocate  
15 shall report that fact to the county prosecutor or the attorney general. If  
16 the complaint is against a state foster care home, the advocate shall refer  
17 the matter to the department of social and rehabilitation services for fur-  
18 ther action with respect to licensing.

19 Sec. 10. (a) The department of social and rehabilitation services and  
20 a foster care home shall:

21 (1) Upon the advocate's request, grant the advocate or advocate's  
22 designee access to all relevant information, records, including the child's  
23 medical records, and documents in the possession of such entities that  
24 the advocate considers necessary in an investigation;

25 (2) assist the advocate upon request with progress reports concerning  
26 the administrative processing of a complaint; and

27 (3) provide the advocate upon request with progress reports con-  
28 cerning the administrative processing of a complaint.

29 (b) The department of social and rehabilitation services, foster care  
30 home or Kansas payment center shall provide information to a biological  
31 parent, child support payor or payee, prospective adoptive parent or foster  
32 parent regarding the provisions of this act.

33 Sec. 11. (a) The advocate shall prepare a report of the findings of an  
34 investigation and make recommendations to the department of social and  
35 rehabilitation services, Kansas payment center or foster care home if the  
36 advocate finds one or more of the following:

37 (1) A matter should be further considered by the department, foster  
38 care home or Kansas payment center;

39 (2) an administrative act should be modified or canceled;

40 (3) reasons should be given for an administrative act; or

41 (4) other actions should be taken by the department, foster care home  
42 or Kansas payment center.

43 (b) Before announcing a finding or recommendation that expressly

1 or by implication criticizes a person as defined in section 2 and amend-  
2 ments thereto, the advocate shall consult with that person. When pub-  
3 lishing an opinion adverse to the department, foster care home or the  
4 Kansas payment center, the advocate shall include in the opinion any  
5 statement made to the advocate by the department, foster care home,  
6 Kansas payment center or other state entity in defense or mitigation of  
7 the action. The advocate may request to be notified by the department,  
8 foster care home, Kansas payment center or other state entity, within a  
9 specified time, of any action taken on any recommendation presented.

10 (c) The advocate shall notify the complainant of the actions taken by  
11 the advocate and the department, foster care home, Kansas payment cen-  
12 ter or other state entity.

13 (d) The advocate shall provide the complainant with a copy of the  
14 advocate's recommendations on a complaint.

15 Sec. 12. (a) No person shall willfully interfere with any lawful action  
16 or activity of an advocate or a volunteer advocate, including the request  
17 for immediate entry into a foster care home, Kansas payment center or  
18 other state entity.

19 (b) No person shall take any discriminatory, disciplinary or retaliatory  
20 action against any foster parent, person, officer, employee of a foster care  
21 home or the Kansas payment center or against any child or any guardian  
22 or family member thereof for any communication by any such individual  
23 with an advocate or a volunteer advocate or for any information given or  
24 disclosed by such individual in good faith to aid the office in carrying out  
25 its duties and responsibilities.

26 (c) Any person that violates the provisions of subsection (a) or (b)  
27 shall be guilty of a class C misdemeanor.

28 Sec. 13. The following persons may make a complaint to the advo-  
29 cate concerning a child alleging that an administrative act is contrary to  
30 law, rules and regulations, policy, imposed without an adequate statement  
31 of reason or based on irrelevant, immaterial or erroneous grounds:

32 (a) The foster child or child for whom child support is processed by  
33 the Kansas payment center if such child is able to articulate a complaint;

34 (b) a biological or adoptive parent of the foster child or child for  
35 whom child support is processed by the Kansas payment center;

36 (c) a foster parent of the foster child;

37 (d) a person having residential custody of a child for whom child  
38 support is processed by the Kansas payment center;

39 (e) a prospective adoptive parent of the foster child or child for whom  
40 child support is processed by the Kansas payment center;

41 (f) a legally appointed guardian or conservator of the foster child or  
42 child for whom child support is processed by the Kansas payment center;

43 (g) a guardian ad litem of the foster child or child for whom child

- 1 support is processed by the Kansas payment center;
- 2 (h) an adult who is related to the foster child or child to the fifth
- 3 degree by marriage, blood or adoption;
- 4 (i) a payee, payor or such person's attorney in child support matters
- 5 whose support moneys are processed through the Kansas payment center;
- 6 (j) a Kansas legislator;
- 7 (k) an attorney for any person described in subsection (a) through (i);
- 8 or
- 9 (l) the advocate upon the advocate's own initiative.

10 Sec. 14. No individual shall investigate any complaint filed with the

11 office of the children's advocate unless the individual has received the

12 training required and designated by the children's advocate as an advocate

13 or a voluntary advocate qualified to investigate such complaints.

14 Sec. 15. A volunteer advocate shall have access to the plan of care

15 and other records or documents kept for or concerning the resident to

16 the same extent and under the same circumstances as an advocate under

17 this section, except that a volunteer advocate shall not have access to any

18 such other records and documents that are privileged medical records.

19 Sec. 16. (a) An advocate or a volunteer advocate is hereby authorized

20 to enter any foster care home and any area within such home at any time

21 with or without prior notice and shall have access to the child of a foster

22 care home at all times.

23 (b) An advocate or a volunteer advocate shall notify immediately the

24 person in charge of a foster care home upon arrival and shall present

25 appropriate identification.

26 (c) A foster child shall have the right to request, deny or terminate

27 visits with an advocate or a volunteer advocate.

28 Sec. 17. All information, records and reports received by or devel-

29 oped by an advocate or a volunteer advocate which relate to a foster child

30 in a foster care home or other state entity, including written material

31 identifying a foster child or other complainant, are confidential and not

32 subject to the provisions of K.S.A. 45-216 to 45-220, inclusive, and

33 amendments thereto, and shall not be disclosed or released by an advo-

34 cate or a volunteer advocate, either by name of the foster child or other

35 complainant or of facts which allow the identity of the foster child or

36 other complainant to be inferred, except upon the order of a court or

37 unless the foster child's legal representative or other complainant con-

38 sents in writing to such disclosure or release by an advocate or a volunteer

39 advocate, except the children's advocate shall forward to the secretary of

40 health and environment and the secretary of social and rehabilitation serv-

41 ices copies of reports received by the children's advocate relating to the

42 health and safety of a foster child. A summary report and findings shall

43 be forwarded to the appropriate person, exclusive of information or ma-



1 terial that identifies a foster child or any other individuals.

2 Sec. 18. An advocate shall have access to all records and documents  
3 kept by the department of health and environment, the department of  
4 social and rehabilitation services and foster care home concerning the  
5 following matters: (a) Licensure of foster care homes dealing with foster  
6 children in state care; (b) certification of such homes dealing with foster  
7 children in state care; (c) public funding reimbursement for the care of  
8 foster children of such homes dealing with foster children; (d) utilization  
9 and medical review records; and (e) complaints regarding care of foster  
10 children of such foster care homes. The provisions of this section shall  
11 not apply to a volunteer advocate.

12 Sec. 19. An advocate shall have access to all records and documents  
13 of the Kansas payment center concerning complaints involving such  
14 center.

15 Sec. 20. The authority granted the advocate under this act is in ad-  
16 dition to the authority granted under the provisions of any rule and reg-  
17 ulation or other act or rule and regulation under which the remedy or  
18 right of appeal or objection is provided for a person, or any procedure  
19 provided for the inquiry into or investigation of any matter. The authority  
20 granted the advocate does not limit or affect the remedy or right of appeal  
21 or objection and is not an exclusive remedy or procedure.

22 Sec. 21. (a) On the effective date of this act, all of the powers, duties,  
23 functions, records and property of the office of the secretary of social and  
24 rehabilitation services, which are prescribed for the office of the chil-  
25 dren's advocate by this act, are hereby transferred to and conferred and  
26 imposed upon the office of the children's advocate, including the power  
27 to expend funds now or hereafter made available in accordance with ap-  
28 propriation acts, are hereby transferred to and conferred and imposed  
29 upon the office of the children's advocate established by this act, except  
30 as is otherwise specifically provided by this act.

31 (b) The office of the children's advocate established by this section  
32 shall be the successor in every way to the powers, duties and functions  
33 of the office of the secretary of social and rehabilitation services in which  
34 such powers, duties and functions were vested prior to the effective date  
35 of this act, except as otherwise specifically provided by this act. Every act  
36 performed under the authority of the office of the children's advocate  
37 established by this act shall be deemed to have the same force and effect  
38 as if performed by the office of the secretary of social and rehabilitation  
39 services in which such powers, duties and functions were vested prior to  
40 the effective date of this act.

41 (c) Subject to the provisions of this act, whenever the office of the  
42 secretary of social and rehabilitation services or words of like effect, is  
43 referred to or designated by a statute, contract or other document, and

1 such reference or designation relates to a power, duty or function which  
2 is transferred to and conferred and imposed upon the office of the chil-  
3 dren's advocate that is established by this act, such reference or desig-  
4 nation shall be deemed to apply to the office of the children's advocate  
5 established by this act.

6 (d) All policies, orders or directives of the office of the secretary of  
7 social and rehabilitation services transferred to and conferred and im-  
8 posed upon the children's advocate which are in existence on the effective  
9 date of this act shall continue to be effective and shall be deemed to be  
10 the policies, orders or directives of the children's advocate established by  
11 this act, until revised, amended or revoked or nullified pursuant to law.  
12 The office of the children's advocate established by this act shall be  
13 deemed to be a continuation of the secretary of social and rehabilitation  
14 services concerning children which are transferred, conferred and im-  
15 posed upon the children's advocate.

16 (e) (1) The children's advocate and the secretary of administration  
17 shall provide that all officers and employees of the secretary of social and  
18 rehabilitation services, who are engaged in the exercise and performance  
19 of the powers, duties and functions of the programs of the office of the  
20 children's advocate that are transferred by this act, are transferred to the  
21 office of the children's advocate established by this section.

22 (2) Officers and employees of the department of social and rehabil-  
23 itation services transferred under this act shall retain all retirement ben-  
24 efits and leave rights which had accrued or vested prior to each date of  
25 transfer. The service of each officer or employee so transferred shall be  
26 deemed to be continuous. All transfers, layoffs and abolition of classified  
27 service positions under the Kansas civil service act which may result from  
28 program transfers under this act shall be made in accordance with the  
29 civil service laws and any rules and regulations adopted thereunder. Noth-  
30 ing in this act shall affect the classified status of any person transferred  
31 to the office of the children's advocate prior to the date of transfer.

32 (3) If the children's advocate and the secretary of social and rehabil-  
33 itation services cannot agree as to how any transfer of an officer or em-  
34 ployee is to take place under this section, the children's advocate and the  
35 secretary of administration shall be responsible for administering any lay-  
36 off that is part of the transfer in accordance with this act.

37 (4) Notwithstanding the effective date of this act, the provisions of  
38 this act prescribing the transfer of officers and employees between the  
39 office of the children's advocate established by this section and the de-  
40 partment of social and rehabilitation services, the date of transfer of each  
41 such officer or employee shall commence at the start of a payroll period.

42 Sec. 22. (a) The children's advocate shall ensure that:

43 (1) No individual involved in the authorization of any individual to

1 represent the office as an advocate or a volunteer advocate is subject to  
2 a conflict of interest;

3 (2) no officer, employee or other representative of the office is sub-  
4 ject to a conflict of interest;

5 (3) policies and procedures are in place to identify and remedy all  
6 conflicts of interest specified under paragraphs (1) and (2);

7 (4) legal counsel is available to the office for advice and consultation  
8 and that legal representation is provided to any advocate against whom  
9 suit or other legal action is brought in connection with the performance  
10 of the advocate's official duties; and

11 (5) the office has the ability to pursue administrative, legal and other  
12 appropriate remedies on behalf of a child or such child's parent who  
13 receives support payments through the Kansas payment center or whose  
14 child is in the custody of the state and subject to the processes of a foster  
15 care facility or home, or other programs, office or process involving chil-  
16 dren whose welfare has been placed under the state's jurisdiction.

17 (b) The children's advocate may enter into contracts with service pro-  
18 viders to provide investigative, legal, public education, training or other  
19 services as may be required to assist the children's advocate in providing  
20 advocate services to foster children whose welfare has been assumed by  
21 the state or as otherwise required to carry out the powers, duties and  
22 functions of the office. Contracts entered into under this subsection shall  
23 not be subject to the competitive bidding requirements of K.S.A. 75-3739  
24 and amendments thereto. No contract may be entered into by the chil-  
25 dren's advocate to privatize the office or to otherwise provide that all or  
26 substantially all of the advocate services or functions of the office are to  
27 be performed by one or more service providers.

28 Sec. 23. (a) Records of the office of children's advocate included un-  
29 der the provisions of this act shall not be disclosed directly or indirectly  
30 to any person except as authorized by the children's advocate or such  
31 person's designee.

32 (b) No documents relating to complaints, investigations or studies in  
33 the possession of the children's advocate or any employee of the children's  
34 advocate shall be read, copied or taken by any officer or employee of the  
35 state of Kansas except as authorized by the children's advocate or such  
36 person's designee.

37 Sec. 24. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its  
38 publication in the statute book.

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