

CONFERENCE COMMITTEE REPORT

MR. PRESIDENT and MR. SPEAKER: Your committee on conference on House amendments to **SB 115** submits the following report:

The Senate accedes to all House amendments to the bill, and your committee on conference further agrees to amend the bill as printed with House Committee amendments, as follows:

On page 1, by striking all in lines 7 through 36;

On page 2, by striking all in lines 1 through 13; following line 13, by inserting:

"New Section 1. (a) Sections 1 through 6, and amendments thereto, shall be known and may be cited as the child advocate act.

(b) As used in the child advocate act:

(1) "Child" means any individual under 18 years of age who:

(A) Is in the custody of the secretary for children and families;

(B) may be alleged to be a child in need of care as provided in K.S.A. 38-2201 et seq., and amendments thereto;

(C) is alleged to be a child in need of care as provided in K.S.A. 38-2201 et seq.; or

(D) is currently or was receiving services or treatment from the department of corrections within the previous five years; and

(2) "office" means the office of the child advocate and includes the child advocate and staff.

New Sec. 2. (a) There is hereby established the office of the child advocate, the head of which shall be the child advocate. In the performance of the powers, duties and functions prescribed by law, the office shall be an independent state agency. The child advocate shall be appointed by the governor and subject to confirmation by the senate as provided by K.S.A. 75-4315b, and amendments thereto.

(b) (1) Except as provided by K.S.A. 46-2601, and amendments thereto, no person appointed to the position of the child advocate shall exercise any power, duty or function of the child advocate until confirmed by the senate. The child advocate shall be selected without regard to political affiliation and on the basis of integrity and capacity for effectively carrying out the duties of the office. The child advocate shall be an individual with extensive experience in the practice of case management, clinical services or legal services to children and families involved in the child welfare system.

(2) No former or current executive or manager of any program or agency or contracting entity subject to oversight by the office may be appointed to the position of the child advocate within 12 months of the end of that individual's period of service with such program or agency.

(3) A person appointed to the position of the child advocate shall serve for a term of five years or until a successor has been appointed and confirmed.

(4) The child advocate shall be in the unclassified service and shall receive an annual salary in an amount equal to the annual salary paid by the state to a district court judge.

(5) The child advocate shall exercise independent judgment in carrying out the duties of the office.

(c) (1) Subject to this subsection, the child advocate shall have general managerial control over the office of the child advocate and shall establish the organizational structure of the office as the child advocate deems appropriate to carry out the responsibilities and functions of the office.

(2) All budgeting, purchasing, personnel and related administrative functions of the office shall be administered under the direction and supervision of the child advocate.

(3) Within the limits of appropriations therefor, the child advocate may hire such

employees in the unclassified service as are necessary to administer the office. Such employees shall serve at the pleasure of the child advocate. Subject to appropriations and this subsection, the child advocate may obtain the services of other professionals necessary to independently perform the functions of the office, including obtaining legal services as provided by K.S.A. 75-769, and amendments thereto.

(4) The child advocate may enter into agreements with the secretary of administration for the provision of personnel, facility management and information technology services.

New Sec. 3. (a) The purpose of the office of the child advocate is to ensure that children and families receive adequate coordination of child welfare services for child protection and care through services offered by the Kansas department for children and families or the department's contracting entities, the department for aging and disability services, the department of corrections, the department of health and environment and juvenile courts.

(b) The office shall receive and resolve complaints that allege the Kansas department for children and families or an entity contracting with the department, by act or omission, has provided inadequate protection or care of children, failed to protect the physical or mental health, safety or welfare of any child or failed to follow established laws, rules and regulations or written policies. The child advocate shall:

(1) Establish and implement procedures for receiving, processing, responding to and resolving complaints made by or on behalf of children that relate to state agencies, service providers, including contractors and subcontractors, and any juvenile court that adversely affect or may adversely affect the health, safety and welfare of such children;

(2) provide the Kansas department for children and families with a notice of availability that describes the office and procedures for contacting the office. The department shall ensure

such notice is prominently posted in department offices and facilities receiving public moneys for the care and placement of children;

(3) maintain a publicly available website;

(4) publicize and notify individuals of the office's services, purpose and contact information;

(5) compile, collect and preserve a record of complaints received and processed that may reveal concerning patterns to be addressed; and

(6) make recommendations for changes to policies, procedures or adopted or proposed rules and regulations of any state or local agency that adversely affect or may adversely affect the health, safety and welfare of any child.

(c) The office shall independently investigate complaints received pursuant to subsection (b) if the office reasonably believes the complaint's allegations may be independently verified through an investigation. To investigate, the office shall:

(1) Establish and implement procedures for investigating complaints;

(2) have access to the following information related to complaints received:

(A) The names and physical location of all children in protective services, treatment or other programs under the jurisdiction of the Kansas department for children and families or the department of corrections;

(B) all written reports of child abuse and neglect;

(C) all records as provided in K.S.A. 38-2201 et seq. and 38-2301 et seq., and amendments thereto; and

(D) all current records required to be maintained pursuant to articles 22 and 23 of chapter 38 of the Kansas Statutes Annotated, and amendments thereto;

(3) communicate privately with the following persons or entities, after consultation with treatment professionals and service providers:

(A) Any child or child's siblings; and

(B) anyone working with the child, including the family, relatives, employees of the Kansas department for children and families or the department of corrections and other persons or entities providing treatment and services;

(4) have access to, including the right to inspect and copy, relevant child records as identified for disclosure in K.S.A. 38-2201 et seq. and 38-2301 et seq., and amendments thereto;

(5) work in conjunction with juvenile intake and assessment workers, juvenile community corrections officers, guardians ad litem and court-appointed special advocates;

(6) take statements under oath and obtain judicial enforcement of compulsory processes; and

(7) subpoena materials and witnesses using the following procedures:

(A) When the office reasonably believes that materials or witnesses sought will assist in the investigation, the child advocate may issue a subpoena directing documents, reports or information to be delivered to the office at a specific time, date and place or directing a person to appear as a witness at a specific time, date and place. Such time and date shall not be sooner than seven days after the service of the subpoena, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, legal holidays and days on which the office of the clerk of the court is not accessible. The child advocate shall keep a copy of the subpoena in a special file maintained for that purpose;

(B) upon receiving service of a subpoena pursuant to this paragraph, the person or agency served shall give written notice of service to any person known to have a right to assert a privilege or assert a right of confidentiality in regard to the documents, reports or information

sought at least five days before the date of delivery or appearance;

(C) any parent, child, guardian ad litem, person or entity subpoenaed or person or entity who claims a privilege or right of confidentiality may request in writing that the child advocate quash a subpoena issued pursuant to this paragraph. The request to quash the subpoena shall be filed with the office at least 24 hours prior to the specified time and date of delivery or appearance, excluding Saturdays, Sundays, legal holidays and days on which the office of the clerk of the court is not accessible, and a copy of the written request shall be given to the person subpoenaed at least 24 hours prior to the specified time and date of delivery or appearance; and

(D) if the child advocate does not quash the subpoena, the written request shall automatically stay the operation of the subpoena until the child advocate obtains a court order for the subpoena to be honored, and the documents, reports or information requested shall not be delivered and the witness shall not appear. An appropriate district court may issue an order for the subpoena to be honored after the court has held a hearing to determine if the documents, reports or information are subject to the claimed privilege or right of confidentiality, and whether it is in the best interests of the child for the subpoena to be honored.

(d) To resolve complaints received pursuant to subsection (b), the office shall:

(1) Establish and implement procedures to resolve the complaints;

(2) independently review the subject of the complaint and after the initial review of the complaint and any accompanying material, the child advocate may recommend that a department or contracting entity:

(A) Consider the matter further;

(B) modify or cancel the department or contracting entity's actions;

(C) alter a rule, order or internal policy;

(D) explain the action further; or

(E) within a reasonable time after receiving a recommendation, provide the office information concerning the department or contracting entity action to implement or not implement recommendations made by the office pursuant to this paragraph;

(3) submit any findings or recommendations pursuant to paragraph (2) to the secretary for children and families or the secretary of corrections as appropriate;

(4) upon reason to believe a criminal investigation is warranted, make a referral of child abuse or neglect to an appropriate law enforcement agency with jurisdiction over the matter and notify the abuse, neglect and exploitation unit of the office of the attorney general; and

(5) produce reports of findings of fact or conclusions of law regarding any complaint, and, if appropriate, the attorney general may file such reports in any pending child in need of care case on behalf of the office.

(e) To assist the legislature in oversight of the child welfare system, the office may:

(1) Meet and discuss any matter in the scope of the child advocate act with the joint committee on child welfare system oversight in regular or executive session under the same duties of confidentiality provided for the child advocate;

(2) review relevant statutes, rules and regulations, policies and procedures for the health, safety and welfare of children;

(3) evaluate the effectiveness of and recommend changes to procedures for reports of child abuse and neglect for child protective services, including, but not limited to, the involvement of the Kansas department for children and families, service providers, guardians ad litem, court appointed special advocates and law enforcement agencies; and

(4) review and recommend changes to law enforcement investigative procedures for

and emergency responses to reports of abuse and neglect.

(f) (1) On or before the beginning of each regular session of the legislature, the office shall prepare and submit a report to the governor, the chief justice of the supreme court and the office of judicial administration, the secretary for children and families, the president of the senate, the speaker of the house of representatives, the joint committee on child welfare oversight, the house of representatives standing committee on child welfare and foster care, the senate standing committee on judiciary, or their successor committees, and any other relevant legislative committee.

(2) Such report shall include:

- (A) The number of complaints received by the office;
- (B) the disposition of such complaints;
- (C) the number of children involved in such complaints;
- (D) the outcome of such complaints;
- (E) any recommendations for changes in statute, policies, procedures or rules and regulations;
- (F) the office's proposed annual budget; and
- (G) any other topics that the office deems appropriate to properly perform the powers, duties and functions provided by the child advocate act.

(g) The annual budget request of the office shall be prepared by the child advocate. The child advocate shall submit an annual budget request to the division of budget. Such budget request shall be prepared and submitted in the manner provided by K.S.A. 75-3716 and 75-3717, and amendments thereto.

(h) To assist the office in the office's duties under the child advocate act, employees of

the Kansas department for children and families, the department's contracting agencies, the department of corrections, juvenile intake and assessment workers, juvenile community corrections officers, guardians ad litem and court appointed special advocates shall:

(1) Work diligently, promptly and in good faith to assist the office in performing the office's powers, duties and functions provided by the child advocate act;

(2) provide full access to and production of records and information requested by the office in the office's duties provided by the act. Such access shall not be a violation of confidentiality of such records if provided and produced in good faith for the purposes of the act;

(3) require employees and contractors of such department or agency to comply with requests from the office in such office's duties provided by the act;

(4) allow employees of such department or agency to file a complaint with or provide records or information to the office without supervisory approval;

(5) not willfully interfere with or obstruct any of the office's duties provided by the act;
and

(6) promptly meet and consult with the office upon request of the office.

New Sec. 4. (a) For any information obtained from a state agency or other entity under the child advocate act, the office shall be subject to the same state and federal statutory disclosure restrictions and confidentiality requirements that are applicable to the state agency or other entity providing such information to the office.

(b) Any files maintained by the office shall be confidential and disclosed only at the discretion of the child advocate, except that the identity of any complainant or child shall not be disclosed by the office unless:

(1) The complainant or child, respectively, or the complainant's or child's legal

representative, consents in writing to such disclosure; or

(2) such disclosure is required by court order.

(c) (1) Any person who, without malice, participates in any complaint or information made or provided in good faith to the office shall have immunity from any civil liability that might otherwise be incurred or imposed. This paragraph shall not be construed to protect from suit or liability when caused by the intentional or willful or wanton misconduct of a person.

(2) The child advocate, the office and any employee of the office shall be immune from civil liability, either personally or in their official capacity, including, but not limited to, claims of damage to or loss of property or personal injury that are caused by or arising out of the performance of duties of the office. This paragraph shall not be construed to protect from suit or liability when caused by the intentional or willful or wanton misconduct of a person.

(3) Any statement or communication made by the child advocate, the office or any employee of the office relevant to a complaint being investigated by the office, whether oral or written, shall be privileged and shall not be disclosed to any person or entity, be admissible in any civil action, administrative proceeding or disciplinary board of this state, be subject to discovery, subpoena or other means of legal compulsion for their release to any person or entity or be admissible in evidence in any judicial or administrative proceeding, unless the child advocate is already a party to such proceedings.

(d) A representative of the office conducting or participating in any investigation of a complaint shall not knowingly disclose to any person other than the office, or a person authorized by the office, the name of any witness examined or any information obtained or given during such investigation. Violation of this subsection is a class A nonperson misdemeanor.

(e) When the office is conducting or has conducted an investigation of a complaint, the

office shall disclose the final result of the investigation with the consent of the child or child's legal representative.

(f) The office shall not be required to testify in any court with respect to matters held to be confidential in this section, except as the court may deem necessary to enforce the provisions of the child advocate act or when otherwise required by court order.

(g) The provisions of this section providing for confidentiality of records shall expire on July 1, 2029, unless the legislature acts to continue such provisions. The legislature shall review this section pursuant to K.S.A. 45-229, and amendments thereto, prior to July 1, 2029.

New Sec. 5. (a) (1) Except as provided by paragraph (2), no retaliatory action shall knowingly be taken against any child or employee of the Kansas department for children and families, an employee of the department's contracting agencies or the department of corrections for any communication made or information given to the office. Violation of this paragraph is a class A nonperson misdemeanor.

(2) Paragraph (1) shall not apply to an employee who discloses:

(A) Information that such employee knows to be false or information without regard for the truth or falsity of the information; or

(B) without lawful authority, information that is confidential as provided by any other provision of law.

(b) An employee of the office of the child advocate shall not knowingly disclose false information or disclose confidential information without lawful authority.

(c) As used in this section, "retaliatory action" includes, but is not limited to:

(1) Letters of reprimand or unsatisfactory performance evaluations;

(2) transfer;

- (3) demotion;
- (4) reduction in pay;
- (5) denial of promotion;
- (6) suspension;
- (7) dismissal; and
- (8) denial of employment.

New Sec. 6. Nothing in this act shall be construed to permit any governmental agency to exercise control or supervision over the child advocate or the office of the child advocate.

Sec. 7. K.S.A. 2023 Supp. 38-2211 is hereby amended to read as follows: 38-2211. (a) *Access to the official file.* The following persons or entities shall have access to the official file of a child in need of care proceeding pursuant to this code:

- (1) The court having jurisdiction over the proceedings, including the presiding judge and any court personnel designated by the judge.
- (2) The parties to the proceedings and their attorneys.
- (3) The guardian ad litem for a child who is the subject of the proceeding.
- (4) A court appointed special advocate for a child who is the subject of the proceeding or a paid staff member of a court appointed special advocate program.
- (5) Any individual, or any public or private agency or institution, having custody of the child under court order or providing educational, medical or mental health services to the child or any placement provider or potential placement provider as determined by the secretary or court services officer.
- (6) A citizen review board.
- (7) The secretary of corrections or any agents designated by the secretary of

corrections.

(8) Any county or district attorney from another jurisdiction with a pending child in need of care matter regarding any of the same parties.

(9) The office of the child advocate pursuant to the child advocate act.

(10) Any other person when authorized by a court order, subject to any conditions imposed by the order.

~~(10) The commission on judicial performance in the discharge of the commission's duties pursuant to article 32 of chapter 20 of the Kansas Statutes Annotated, and amendments thereto.~~

(11) An investigating law enforcement agency.

(b) *Access to the social file.* The following persons or entities shall have access to the social file of a child in need of care proceeding pursuant to this code:

(1) The court having jurisdiction over the proceeding, including the presiding judge and any court personnel designated by the judge.

(2) The attorney for a party to the proceeding or the person or persons designated by an Indian tribe that is a party.

(3) The guardian ad litem for a child who is the subject of the proceeding.

(4) A court appointed special advocate for a child who is the subject of the proceeding or a paid staff member of a court appointed special advocate program.

(5) A citizen review board.

(6) The secretary.

(7) The secretary of corrections or any agents designated by the secretary of corrections.

(8) Any county or district attorney from another jurisdiction with a pending child in need of care matter regarding any of the same parties or interested parties.

(9) The office of the child advocate pursuant to the child advocate act.

(10) Any other person when authorized by a court order, subject to any conditions imposed by the order.

~~(10)~~(11) An investigating law enforcement agency.

(c) *Preservation of records.* The Kansas state historical society shall be allowed to take possession for preservation in the state archives of any court records related to proceedings under the Kansas code for care of children whenever such records otherwise would be destroyed. No such records in the custody of the Kansas state historical society shall be disclosed directly or indirectly to anyone for 70 years after creation of the records, except as provided in subsections (a) and (b). Pursuant to subsections ~~(a)(9) and (b)(9)~~ (a)(10) and (b)(10), a judge of the district court may allow inspection for research purposes of any court records in the custody of the Kansas state historical society related to proceedings under the Kansas code for care of children.

Sec. 8. K.S.A. 2023 Supp. 38-2212 is hereby amended to read as follows: 38-2212. (a) *Principle of appropriate access.* Information contained in confidential agency records concerning a child alleged or adjudicated to be in need of care may be disclosed as provided in this section and shall be disclosed as provided in subsection (e). Disclosure shall in all cases be guided by the principle of providing access only to persons or entities with a need for information that is directly related to achieving the purposes of this code.

(b) *Free exchange of information.* Pursuant to K.S.A. 38-2210, and amendments thereto, the secretary and juvenile intake and assessment agencies shall participate in the free exchange of information concerning a child who is alleged or adjudicated to be in need of care.

(c) *Necessary access.* The following persons or entities shall have access to information from agency records. Access shall be limited to information reasonably necessary to carry out their lawful responsibilities, to maintain their personal safety and the personal safety of individuals in their care, or to educate, diagnose, treat, care for or protect a child alleged to be in need of care. Information authorized to be disclosed pursuant to this subsection shall not contain information that identifies a reporter of a child who is alleged or adjudicated to be a child in need of care.

(1) A child named in the report or records, a guardian ad litem appointed for the child and the child's attorney.

(2) A parent or other person responsible for the welfare of a child, or such person's legal representative.

(3) A court-appointed special advocate for a child, a citizen review board or other advocate that reports to the court.

(4) A person licensed to practice the healing arts or mental health profession in order to diagnose, care for, treat or supervise:

(A) A child whom such service provider reasonably suspects may be in need of care;

(B) a member of the child's family; or

(C) a person who allegedly abused or neglected the child.

(5) A person or entity licensed or registered by the secretary of health and environment or approved by the secretary for children and families to care for, treat or supervise a child in need of care.

(6) A coroner or medical examiner when such person is determining the cause of death of a child.

(7) The state child death review board established under K.S.A. 22a-243, and amendments thereto.

(8) An attorney for a private party who files a petition pursuant to K.S.A. 38-2233(b), and amendments thereto.

(9) A foster parent, prospective foster parent, permanent custodian, prospective permanent custodian, adoptive parent or prospective adoptive parent. In order to assist such persons in making an informed decision regarding acceptance of a particular child, to help the family anticipate problems that may occur during the child's placement, and to help the family meet the needs of the child in a constructive manner, the secretary shall seek and shall provide the following information to such persons as the information becomes available to the secretary:

(A) Strengths, needs and general behavior of the child;

(B) circumstances that necessitated placement;

(C) information about the child's family and the child's relationship to the family that may affect the placement;

(D) important life experiences and relationships that may affect the child's feelings, behavior, attitudes or adjustment;

(E) medical history of the child, including third-party coverage that may be available to the child; and

(F) education history, to include present grade placement, special strengths and weaknesses.

(10) The state protection and advocacy agency as provided by K.S.A. 65-5603(a)(10) or ~~K.S.A.~~ 74-5515(a)(2)(A) and (B), and amendments thereto.

(11) Any educational institution to the extent necessary to enable the educational

institution to provide the safest possible environment for its pupils and employees.

(12) Any educator to the extent necessary to enable the educator to protect the personal safety of the educator and the educator's pupils.

(13) The office of the child advocate pursuant to the child advocate act.

(14) Any other federal, state or local government executive branch entity or any agent of such entity, having a need for such information in order to carry out such entity's responsibilities under the law to protect children from abuse and neglect.

(d) *Specified access.* The following persons or entities shall have access to information contained in agency records as specified. Information authorized to be disclosed pursuant to this subsection shall not contain information that identifies a reporter of a child who is alleged or adjudicated to be a child in need of care.

(1) Information from confidential agency records of the Kansas department for children and families, a law enforcement agency or any juvenile intake and assessment worker of a child alleged or adjudicated to be in need of care shall be available to members of the standing house or senate committee on judiciary, house committee on corrections and juvenile justice, house committee on child welfare and foster care, house committee on appropriations, senate committee on ways and means, legislative post audit committee and any joint committee with authority to consider children's and families' issues, when carrying out such member's or committee's official functions in accordance with K.S.A. 75-4319, and amendments thereto, in a closed or executive meeting. Except in limited conditions established by $\frac{2}{3}$ of the members of such committee, records and reports received by the committee shall not be further disclosed. Unauthorized disclosure may subject such member to discipline or censure from the house of representatives or senate. The secretary for children and families shall not summarize the

outcome of department actions regarding a child alleged to be a child in need of care in information available to members of such committees.

(2) The secretary for children and families may summarize the outcome of department actions regarding a child alleged to be a child in need of care to a person having made such report.

(3) Information from confidential reports or records of a child alleged or adjudicated to be a child in need of care may be disclosed to the public when:

(A) The individuals involved or their representatives have given express written consent; or

(B) the investigation of the abuse or neglect of the child or the filing of a petition alleging a child to be in need of care has become public knowledge, provided, however, that the agency shall limit disclosure to confirmation of procedural details relating to the handling of the case by professionals.

(e) *Law enforcement access.* The secretary shall disclose confidential agency records of a child alleged or adjudicated to be a child in need of care, as described in K.S.A. 38-2209, and amendments thereto, to the law enforcement agency investigating the alleged or substantiated report or investigation of abuse or neglect, regardless of the disposition of such report or investigation. Such records shall include, but not be limited to, any information regarding such report or investigation, records of past reports or investigations concerning such child and such child's siblings and the perpetrator or alleged perpetrator and the name and contact information of the reporter or persons alleging abuse or neglect and case managers, investigators or ~~contracting agency entity~~ employees assigned to or investigating such report. Such records shall only be used for the purposes of investigating the alleged or substantiated report or investigation

of abuse or neglect.

(f) *Court order.* Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, a court of competent jurisdiction, after in camera inspection, may order disclosure of confidential agency records pursuant to a determination that the disclosure is in the best interests of the child who is the subject of the reports or that the records are necessary for the proceedings of the court. The court shall specify the terms of disclosure and impose appropriate limitations.

(g) (1) Notwithstanding any other provision of law to the contrary, except as provided in paragraph (6), in the event that child abuse or neglect results in a child fatality or near fatality, reports or records of a child alleged or adjudicated to be in need of care received by the secretary, a law enforcement agency or any juvenile intake and assessment worker shall become a public record and subject to disclosure pursuant to K.S.A. 45-215, and amendments thereto.

(2) Within seven days of receipt of a request in accordance with the procedures adopted under K.S.A. 45-220, and amendments thereto, the secretary shall notify any affected individual that an open records request has been made concerning such records. The secretary or any affected individual may file a motion requesting the court to prevent disclosure of such record or report, or any select portion thereof. Notice of the filing of such motion shall be provided to all parties requesting the records or reports, and such party or parties shall have a right to hearing, upon request, prior to the entry of any order on such motion. If the affected individual does not file such motion within seven days of notification, and the secretary has not filed a motion, the secretary shall release the reports or records. If such motion is filed, the court shall consider the effect such disclosure may have upon an ongoing criminal investigation, a pending prosecution, or the privacy of the child, if living, or the child's siblings, parents or guardians, and the public's interest in the disclosure of such records or reports. The court shall make written findings on the

record justifying the closing of the records and shall provide a copy of the journal entry to the affected parties and the individual requesting disclosure pursuant to the Kansas open records act, K.S.A. 45-215 et seq., and amendments thereto.

(3) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (2), in the event that child abuse or neglect results in a child fatality, the secretary shall release the following information in response to an open records request made pursuant to the Kansas open records act, within seven business days of receipt of such request, as allowed by applicable law:

(A) Age and sex of the child;

(B) date of the fatality;

(C) a summary of any previous reports of abuse or neglect received by the secretary involving the child, along with the findings of such reports; and

(D) any department recommended services provided to the child.

(4) Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph (2), in the event that a child fatality occurs while such child was in the custody of the secretary for children and families, the secretary shall release the following information in response to an open records request made pursuant to the Kansas open records act, within seven business days of receipt of such request, as allowed by applicable law:

(A) Age and sex of the child;

(B) date of the fatality; and

(C) a summary of the facts surrounding the death of the child.

(5) For reports or records requested pursuant to this subsection, the time limitations specified in this subsection shall control to the extent of any inconsistency between this subsection and K.S.A. 45-218, and amendments thereto. As used in this section, "near fatality"

means an act that, as certified by a person licensed to practice medicine and surgery, places the child in serious or critical condition.

(6) Nothing in this subsection shall allow the disclosure of reports, records or documents concerning the child and such child's biological parents that were created prior to such child's adoption. Nothing herein is intended to require that an otherwise privileged communication lose its privileged character.

Sec. 9. K.S.A. 38-2213 is hereby amended to read as follows: 38-2213. (a) *Principle of limited disclosure.* Information contained in confidential law enforcement records concerning a child alleged or adjudicated to be in need of care may be disclosed as provided in this section. Disclosure shall in all cases be guided by the principle of providing access only to persons or entities with a need for information that is directly related to achieving the purposes of this code.

(b) *Free exchange of information.* Pursuant to K.S.A. 38-2210, and amendments thereto, a law enforcement agency shall participate in the free exchange of information concerning a child who is alleged or adjudicated to be in need of care.

(c) *Access to information in law enforcement records.* In order to discharge their official duties, the following persons or entities shall have access to confidential law enforcement records concerning a child alleged or adjudicated to be in need of care.

(1) The court having jurisdiction over the proceedings, including the presiding judge and any court personnel designated by the judge.

(2) The secretary.

(3) ~~The commissioner of juvenile justice~~ secretary of corrections.

(4) Law enforcement officers or county or district attorneys or their staff.

(5) Any juvenile intake and assessment worker.

(6) Members of a court-appointed multidisciplinary team.

(7) The office of the child advocate pursuant to the child advocate act.

(8) Any other federal, state or local government executive branch entity, or any agent of such entity, having a need for such information in order to carry out such entity's responsibilities under law to protect children from abuse and neglect.

~~(8)(9)~~ Persons or entities allowed access pursuant to ~~subsection (f)~~ of K.S.A. 38-2212~~(f)~~, and amendments thereto.

(d) *Necessary access.* The following persons or entities shall have access to information from law enforcement records when reasonably necessary to carry out their lawful responsibilities, to maintain their personal safety and the personal safety of individuals in their care, or to educate, diagnose, treat, care for or protect a child alleged or adjudicated to be in need of care. Information authorized to be disclosed in this subsection shall not contain information ~~which~~ that identifies a reporter of a child alleged or adjudicated to be a child in need of care.

(1) Any individual, or public or private agency authorized by a properly constituted authority to diagnose, care for, treat or supervise a child who is the subject of a report or record of child abuse or neglect, including physicians, psychiatrists, nurses, nurse practitioners, psychologists, licensed social workers, child development specialists, physician assistants, community mental health workers, alcohol and drug abuse counselors, and licensed or registered child care providers.

(2) School administrators shall have access to but shall not copy law enforcement records and may disclose information to teachers, paraprofessionals and other school personnel as necessary to meet the educational needs of the child or to protect the safety of students and school employees.

(3) The department of health and environment or persons authorized by the department of health and environment pursuant to K.S.A. 65-512, and amendments thereto, for the purposes of carrying out responsibilities relating to licensure or registration of child care providers as required by article 5 of chapter 65 of the Kansas Statutes Annotated, and amendments thereto.

(e) *Legislative access.* Information from law enforcement records of a child alleged or adjudicated to be in need of care shall be available to members of the standing house or senate committee on judiciary, house committee on corrections and juvenile justice, house committee on appropriations, senate committee on ways and means, legislative post audit committee and any joint committee with authority to consider children's and families' issues, when carrying out such member's or committee's official functions in accordance with K.S.A. 75-4319, and amendments thereto, in a closed or executive meeting. Except in limited conditions established by $\frac{2}{3}$ of the members of such committee, records and reports received by the committee shall not be further disclosed. Unauthorized disclosure may subject such member to discipline or censure from the house of representatives or senate.

(f) *Court order.* Notwithstanding the provisions of this section, a court of competent jurisdiction, after in camera inspection, may order disclosure of confidential law enforcement records pursuant to a determination that the disclosure is in the best interests of the child who is the subject of the reports or that the records are necessary for the proceedings of the court and otherwise admissible as evidence. The court shall specify the terms of disclosure and impose appropriate limitations.

Sec. 10. K.S.A. 38-2309 is hereby amended to read as follows: 38-2309. (a) *Official file.* The official file of proceedings pursuant to this code shall consist of the complaint, process, service of process, orders, writs and journal entries reflecting hearings held, judgments and

decrees entered by the court. The official file shall be kept separate from other records of the court.

(b) The official file shall be open for public inspection, unless the judge determines that opening the official file for public inspection is not in the best interests of a juvenile who is less than 14 years of age. Information identifying victims and alleged victims of sex offenses, as defined in article 35 of chapter 21 of the Kansas Statutes Annotated, prior to their repeal, or article 55 of chapter 21 of the Kansas Statutes Annotated, or K.S.A. ~~2022 Supp.~~ 21-6419 through 21-6422, and amendments thereto, or human trafficking or aggravated human trafficking, as defined in K.S.A. 21-3446 or 21-3447, prior to their repeal, or K.S.A. ~~2022 Supp.~~ 21-5426, and amendments thereto, shall not be disclosed or open to public inspection under any circumstances. Nothing in this section shall prohibit the victim or alleged victim of any sex offense from voluntarily disclosing such victim's identity. An official file closed pursuant to this section and information identifying the victim or alleged victim of any sex offense shall be disclosed only to the following:

- (1) A judge of the district court and members of the staff of the court designated by the judge;
- (2) parties to the proceedings and their attorneys;
- (3) any individual or any public or private agency or institution: (A) Having custody of the juvenile under court order; or (B) providing educational, medical or mental health services to the juvenile;
- (4) the juvenile's court appointed special advocate;
- (5) any placement provider or potential placement provider as determined by the commissioner or court services officer;

(6) law enforcement officers or county or district attorneys, or their staff, when necessary for the discharge of their official duties;

(7) the Kansas racing and gaming commission, upon written request of the commission chairperson, for the purpose provided by K.S.A. 74-8804, and amendments thereto, except that information identifying the victim or alleged victim of any sex offense shall not be disclosed pursuant to this subsection;

(8) juvenile intake and assessment workers;

(9) ~~the commissioner~~ secretary of corrections;

(10) the office of the child advocate pursuant to the child advocate act; and

(11) any other person when authorized by a court order, subject to any conditions imposed by the order; ~~and~~

~~(11) the commission on judicial performance in the discharge of the commission's duties pursuant to article 32 of chapter 20 of the Kansas Statutes Annotated, and amendments thereto.~~

(c) *Social file.* (1) Reports and information received by the court, other than the official file, shall be privileged and open to inspection only by the following:

(A) Attorneys for the parties;

(B) juvenile intake and assessment workers;

(C) ~~court appointed~~ court-appointed special advocates;

(D) juvenile community corrections officers;

(E) the juvenile's guardian ad litem, if any;

(F) the office of the child advocate pursuant to the child advocate act; or upon

(G) any other person when authorized by the order of a judge of the district court or

appellate court.

(2) The reports shall not be further disclosed without approval of the court or by being presented as admissible evidence.

(d) *Preservation of records.* The Kansas state historical society shall be allowed to take possession for preservation in the state archives of any court records related to proceedings under the Kansas juvenile justice code or the revised Kansas juvenile justice code whenever such records otherwise would be destroyed. The Kansas state historical society shall make available for public inspection any unexpunged docket entry or official file in its custody concerning any juvenile 14 or more years of age at the time an offense is alleged to have been committed by the juvenile. No other such records in the custody of the Kansas state historical society shall be disclosed directly or indirectly to anyone for 70 years after creation of the records, except as provided in subsections (b) and (c). A judge of the district court may allow inspection for research purposes of any court records in the custody of the Kansas state historical society related to proceedings under the Kansas juvenile justice code or the revised Kansas juvenile justice code.

(e) Relevant information, reports and records, shall be made available to the department of corrections upon request, and a showing that the former juvenile has been convicted of a crime and placed in the custody of the secretary of corrections.

Sec. 11. K.S.A. 38-2310 is hereby amended to read as follows: 38-2310. (a) All records of law enforcement officers and agencies and municipal courts concerning an offense committed or alleged to have been committed by a juvenile under 14 years of age shall be kept readily distinguishable from criminal and other records and shall not be disclosed to anyone except:

(1) The judge of the district court and members of the staff of the court designated by

the judge;

- (2) parties to the proceedings and their attorneys;
- (3) the Kansas department for children and families;
- (4) the juvenile's court appointed special advocate, any officer of a public or private agency or institution or any individual having custody of a juvenile under court order or providing educational, medical or mental health services to a juvenile;
- (5) any educational institution, to the extent necessary to enable the educational institution to provide the safest possible environment for its pupils and employees;
- (6) any educator, to the extent necessary to enable the educator to protect the personal safety of the educator and the educator's pupils;
- (7) law enforcement officers or county or district attorneys, or their staff, when necessary for the discharge of their official duties;
- (8) the central repository, as defined by K.S.A. 22-4701, and amendments thereto, for use only as a part of the juvenile offender information system established under K.S.A. 38-2326, and amendments thereto;
- (9) juvenile intake and assessment workers;
- (10) the department of corrections;
- (11) juvenile community corrections officers;
- (12) the interstate compact for juveniles compact administrator for the purpose of carrying out the responsibilities related to the interstate compact for juveniles;
- (13) the office of the child advocate pursuant to the child advocate act;
- (14) any other person when authorized by a court order, subject to any conditions imposed by the order; and

~~(14)~~(15) as provided in subsection (c).

(b) The provisions of this section shall not apply to records concerning:

(1) A violation, by a person 14 or more years of age, of any provision of chapter 8 of the Kansas Statutes Annotated, and amendments thereto, or of any city ordinance or county resolution which relates to the regulation of traffic on the roads, highways or streets or the operation of self-propelled or nonself-propelled vehicles of any kind;

(2) a violation, by a person 16 or more years of age, of any provision of chapter 32 of the Kansas Statutes Annotated, and amendments thereto; or

(3) an offense for which the juvenile is prosecuted as an adult.

(c) All records of law enforcement officers and agencies and municipal courts concerning an offense committed or alleged to have been committed by a juvenile 14 or more years of age shall be subject to the same disclosure restrictions as the records of adults. Information identifying victims and alleged victims of sex offenses, as defined in article 35 of chapter 21 of the Kansas Statutes Annotated, prior to their repeal, or article 55 of chapter 21 of the Kansas Statutes Annotated, and amendments thereto, K.S.A. ~~2022 Supp.~~ 21-6419 through 21-6422, and amendments thereto, or human trafficking or aggravated human trafficking, as defined in K.S.A. 21-3446 or 21-3447, prior to their repeal, or K.S.A. ~~2022 Supp.~~ 21-5426, and amendments thereto, shall not be disclosed or open to public inspection under any circumstances. Nothing in this section shall prohibit the victim or any alleged victim of any sex offense from voluntarily disclosing such victim's identity.

(d) Relevant information, reports and records, shall be made available to the department of corrections upon request and a showing that the former juvenile has been convicted of a crime and placed in the custody of the secretary of corrections.

(e) All records, reports and information obtained as a part of the juvenile intake and assessment process for juveniles shall be confidential, and shall not be disclosed except as provided by statutory law and rules and regulations promulgated by the secretary.

(1) Any court of record may order the disclosure of such records, reports and other information to any person or entity.

(2) The head of any juvenile intake and assessment program, certified by the secretary, may authorize disclosure of such records, reports and other information to:

(A) A person licensed to practice the healing arts who has before that person a juvenile whom the person reasonably suspects may be abused or neglected;

(B) a court-appointed special advocate for a juvenile or an agency having the legal responsibility or authorization to care for, treat or supervise a juvenile;

(C) a parent or other person responsible for the welfare of a juvenile, or such person's legal representative, with protection for the identity of persons reporting and other appropriate persons;

(D) the juvenile, the attorney and a guardian ad litem, if any, for such juvenile;

(E) the police or other law enforcement agency;

(F) an agency charged with the responsibility of preventing or treating physical, mental or emotional abuse or neglect or sexual abuse of children, if the agency requesting the information has standards of confidentiality as strict or stricter than the requirements of the Kansas code for care of children or the revised Kansas juvenile justice code, whichever is applicable;

(G) members of a multidisciplinary team under this code;

(H) an agency authorized by a properly constituted authority to diagnose, care for, treat

or supervise a child who is the subject of a report or record of child abuse or neglect;

(I) any individual, or public or private agency authorized by a properly constituted authority to diagnose, care for, treat or supervise a juvenile who is the subject of a report or record of child abuse or neglect, specifically including the following: Physicians, psychiatrists, nurses, nurse practitioners, psychologists, licensed social workers, child development specialists, physician assistants, community mental health workers, addiction counselors and licensed or registered child care providers;

(J) a citizen review board pursuant to K.S.A. 38-2207, and amendments thereto;

(K) an educational institution to the extent necessary to enable such institution to provide the safest possible environment for pupils and employees of the institution;

(L) any educator to the extent necessary for the protection of the educator and pupils;

(M) any juvenile intake and assessment worker of another certified juvenile intake and assessment program;~~and~~

(N) the interstate compact for juveniles compact administrator for the purpose of carrying out the responsibilities related to the interstate compact for juveniles; and

(O) the office of the child advocate pursuant to the child advocate act.

Sec. 12. K.S.A. 38-2213, 38-2309 and 38-2310 and K.S.A. 2023 Supp. 38-2211 and 38-2212 are hereby repealed.";

Also on page 2, in line 15, by striking "Kansas register" and inserting "statute book";

And by renumbering sections accordingly;

On page 1, in the title, in line 1, by striking all after "concerning"; by striking all in lines 2 and 3; in line 4, by striking all before the period and inserting "children and minors; establishing the office of the child advocate as an independent state agency and prescribing certain powers,

duties and functions thereof; authorizing access to certain records related to children and minors by the office of the child advocate; amending K.S.A. 38-2213, 38-2309 and 38-2310 and K.S.A. 2023 Supp. 38-2211 and 38-2212 and repealing the existing sections";

And your committee on conference recommends the adoption of this report.

Conferees on part of House

Conferees on part of Senate