

SESSION OF 2026

SUPPLEMENTAL NOTE ON HOUSE BILL NO. 2589

As Amended by House Committee on Child
Welfare and Foster Care

Brief*

HB 2589, as amended, would amend provisions and requirements relating to the reporting of instances of child abuse and neglect to prohibit anonymous reporting.

Reporting to the Secretary for Children and Families

The bill would prohibit the Secretary for Children and Families (Secretary) from accepting, transmitting, or assigning anonymous reports of child abuse or neglect and would require the Secretary to inform anonymous reporters of this prohibition. However, the bill would require the Secretary to transmit an anonymous report to law enforcement if:

- There is serious physical harm to, serious deterioration of, or sexual abuse of a child; and
- Action is required to protect such child.

Information to Be Provided to a Reporter

When a person attempts to make an anonymous report, the bill would require the Secretary to inform such person:

*Supplemental notes are prepared by the Legislative Research Department and do not express legislative intent. The supplemental note and fiscal note for this bill may be accessed on the Internet at <https://klrd.gov/>

- The Secretary is prohibited from accepting an anonymous report unless the person provides their name, address, telephone number, and residential address;
- When a person's identifiable information would be deemed confidential and not be disclosed under state law; and
- If the person is still unwilling to provide the required identifiable information, or provide alternative ways to address concerns, including referrals to community services.

Confidentiality

The bill would provide that any identifying information provided by a person related to or provided for the purposes of reporting child abuse or neglect would be confidential and not disclosed except as provided by the Revised Kansas Code for Care of Children.

Report to Legislative Committees

The bill would require the Secretary, on or before the first day of the 2027 Legislative Session, and on the first day of the legislative session every year thereafter, to submit a report on data concerning reports made and received by the Department for Children and Families (DCF) and any reports transmitted to law enforcement agencies to the House Committee on Child Welfare and Foster Care and the Joint Committee on Child Welfare System Oversight, or any successor committees.

Background

The bill was introduced by the House Committee on Child Welfare and Foster Care at the request of Representatives Johnson and Buehler.

House Committee on Child Welfare and Foster Care

In the House Committee hearing, **proponent** testimony was provided by Representative Buehler and Representative Johnson, as well as representatives of the Children's Alliance of Kansas and DCF. The proponents generally stated the bill, if enacted, would aid individuals who fall victim to unsubstantiated claims of abuse. The proponents also noted the bill would allow investigators to remain in contact with the reporter during investigations, allowing for the collection of information to be more accessible.

Written-only proponent testimony was provided by a representative of Kansas Appleseed and one private citizen.

Neutral testimony was provided by a representative Kansas Association of Chiefs of Police, Kansas Sheriffs' Association, and Kansas Peace Officers Association and the Office of the Child Advocate. The conferees generally stated the necessity of acknowledging a lack of anonymous reporting avenues may affect the number of self-reports of abuse that occur. The conferees also requested data tracking for reports of abuse to be included in the bill in order to better understand the incoming reports of abuse in the state.

No further testimony was provided.

The Senate Committee amended the bill to:

- Remove the section of the bill that would have provided for the confidentiality of reporter information in law enforcement records;

- Remove language that would have made false reports of child abuse or neglect a class B misdemeanor; and
- Add language to require the Secretary to submit a report on data concerning reports made and received by DCF to certain legislative committees, beginning in 2027.

Fiscal Information

According to the fiscal note prepared by the Division of the Budget on the bill, as introduced, enactment of the bill would have no fiscal impact on DCF or the Office of Judicial Administration.

Department for Children and Families; anonymous reporting; child abuse; child neglect; mandated reporting