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**Testimony to the Senate Judiciary Committee
In Support of HB2534 as Amended by the House Committee
March 8, 2012**

Chairman Owens and Committee Members,

One of the legislative priorities for our associations this year is to support bills enhancing the safety of our children. This is one of those bills. The Kansas Association of Chiefs of Police, Kansas Sheriffs Association, and Kansas Peace Officers Association support HB2534 as amended by the House Committee. It is truly unfortunate that we should need to even consider such a bill. But we know it is necessary.

Over the past several years there has been more than one case in the national spotlight in which parents fail to report their missing child. Some of those cases have demonstrated how difficult these cases can be to solve. Especially when information is either concealed or false information is presented. It is sometimes weeks before a child's body is found, or perhaps never. Once a child's body is found much of the evidence can be lost due to the passage of time and exposure to the elements. In many of these cases states had no laws to require the reporting of the child's missing status or even their death to law enforcement. In those cases, some of these parent's have not been successfully prosecuted for any culpability for jeopardizing the child's welfare or, in the worst cases, the death of the child. Kansas children deserve better.

Kansas law enforcement officers who have to investigate these cases need your help by assuring we have the tools to bring these cases to successful conclusion and to hold those responsible accountable. We are the ones who struggle first hand with the facts of the case and the dead end leads generated by concealment and false information. Often that obstruction comes from the ones that are supposed to love and take care of these children. More importantly, the children who are the victims along with their family members not responsible for the crime who suffer the most when someone fails to report of these crimes or stonewalls the investigation. Help us help these children.

While we wish we could say this never happens in Kansas, sadly it does. This bill will create a law to hold those accountable who deny a child the opportunity to be found when missing, who deny or obstruct a child's right to have law enforcement investigate their disappearance or death, who deny a child who has died the decency of proper respect and burial. Kansas children deserve the protection this law will provide. Our hope is that this law will never be used beyond a tool of prevention. But in our hearts we know it will. Children deserve to know that in Kansas their life matters.

We respectfully request you to recommend HB2534 as amended by the House Committee favorably for passage.

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