



Senate Judiciary Committee

March 19, 2013

House Bill 2205

Presented by:

Brian Dempsey

Deputy Director of Prevention & Protection Services

Kansas Department for Children and Families

For additional information, contact:

Michelle Schroeder, Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs
Docking State Office Building, 6th Floor North
(785) 296-3271

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Written Support Testimony of:

Brian Dempsey, Deputy Director of Prevention & Protection Services
Department for Children and Families
Topeka, Kansas

Presented to:

The Honorable Chair and Honorable Members
of the Senate Judiciary Committee:

DCF testimony on House Bill 2205

Chairman Jeff King, Vice-Chair Greg Smith, Ranking Member David Haley and Honored Members:

Under current law, courts are required to schedule adoption hearings between 30 and 60 days subsequent to the filing of an adoption petition. In independent and stepparent adoptions, notice of the final adoption hearing must be provided to the parents or presumed parents, unless their parental rights have been terminated, and any other person the court directs. In independent adoptions, notice also must be provided to the child's legal guardian or the person possessing parental rights.

House Bill 2205 changes the timeframe for adoption hearings by requiring it be held within 60 days subsequent to the filing of the adoption petition. Additionally, the bill authorizes the court to forgo notices of adoption hearings if the notice is waived.

When the Secretary of the Department for Children and Families executes the consent to adoption, legal barriers are removed and adoption of the child may proceed. The ability to set a hearing sooner, after the adoption petition is filed, would allow children in the Secretary's custody to achieve permanency more quickly. In this context, DCF supports the intent of the bill.

With respect to allowing a waiver of notice of hearing, the bill as amended clarifies the party entitled to notice may waive notice. Federal law requires notice to the legal guardian of a child. The amendment allows Department for Children and Families to be in compliance with federal requirements regarding notice.

DCF supports the bill as amended.