

Mr. Chair and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for allowing me to testify in favor of Senate Bill 159.

For the past couple years, I've often been moved to emotion when viewing commercials about adoption and foster care on television. But in my heart, I've known that this kind of more permanent move wasn't in my future. So what to do?

Along came my exposure to Safe Families and Dr. Anderson last summer, and I knew that I had probably found the answer to my dilemma on how to be involved in a greater way with troubled families and kids in Newton and in Kansas.

What we know:

- Around 70% of the 400,000 foster kids nationwide are there because of neglect, not sexual or physical abuse.
- 59% of Safe Family placements are because of homelessness, parental crisis or medical crisis.
- Average stay for traditional foster care = 717 days
- Average stay for Safe Families care = 44 days

Potential impacts:

- Child neglect & maltreatment prevention
- Child welfare deflection
- Family support & stabilization

Benefits to Kansans:

- Reduce CPS (Child Protective Service) caseloads
- Cost savings
- Stronger families

Rep. Marc Rhoades