

STATE OF KANSAS

SENATE

14TH DISTRICT
STATE CAPITOL
TOPEKA, KS 66612
(785) 296-7678
forrest.knox@senate.ks.gov



17120 UDALL RD.
ALTOONA, KS 66710
(785) 783-5564
senatorforrestknox@gmail.com

FORREST J. KNOX

House Standing Committee on Judiciary

Testimony Supporting SB 159

March 17, 2015

Chairman Barker,

SB 159, as amended by the Senate, provides the legal framework to implement Safe Families in the state of Kansas. This volunteer program, which is working wonderfully in several states, is one of the best things I've seen coming out this session. I believe that it could enable communities to step up and meet many of the needs of their local families. In the process we could literally see a savings of \$100's millions to the state. Better yet, we will see families healed rather than torn apart by the state's intervention. Please support Safe Families, SB 148, as amended into this bill on the Senate floor.

Section eight of SB 159 is the original bill and amends the Kansas code for the care of children, addressing the situation where a law enforcement officer encounters the presence of children in a home where unlawful drug activity is occurring.

Current law allows an officer to take a child into custody when the officer "reasonably believes the child will be harmed if not immediately removed" from the residence.

This change in law gives the officer more authority to remove a child when unlawful drug activity is found in the home "that threatens the safety of the child."

Instances have occurred recently which resulted in the death of the child where law enforcement did not have enough reason to believe the child would be harmed if not immediately removed, though unlawful drug activity was occurring.

Protection of parental rights is basic to our society. However, when a parent chooses to expose their children to unlawful drug activity in the home, they are not looking out for the safety of their children and open the door to the state stepping in to insure the protection of their children.

Thank you for your consideration of SB 159.