

To: Senator Les Donovan
From: Keri Strahler (785) 250-2642
Date: 4/26/2016
RE: Written testimony for SB 508

Dear Honorable Chairman Donovan and members of the Assessment and Taxation Committee;

Back in 2011, I had a nervous breakdown and my children went into state's custody. Paramount to our reintegration was the Shawnee County Citizen's Review Board, (CRB). Judge Mitchell assigned our case to this panel of volunteers and I would have been lost without their parenting tips and careful attention to our case.

The duties and responsibilities of a CRB volunteer are set out in K. S. A. 38-2208. A CRB shall:

- review cases, receive verbal information from all parties with pertinent information about the cases, and access information in the court's case file,
- determine the progress which has been made to acquire a permanent home for the children,
- suggest alternative goals for the cases, if progress is insufficient, and
- make recommendations to the presiding judge regarding further actions on the cases.

These volunteers help to process cases faster and provide another pair of eyes on Truancy and Child In Need of Care cases for the presiding judge. However, the reason I write to plead your attention is that last summer, our 18th District Courts lost their CRB due to lack of funding.

Sedgwick County lost this valuable resource and presiding juvenile judge, the Honorable Dan Brooks asked that this service be reinstated. Senator Kelly told me that the state was broke, so I looked for opportunities that might help to build a robust CRB in Wichita for the benefit of broken families and found SB 508.

An analyst at our Kansas Division for the Budget shared that if SB 508 passed, additional revenue for FY2016 would be around \$170.6 million, with those numbers tapering down over future years. 2019 would see \$136 million.

In shrinking government spending, good programs were cut, Sedgwick County's CRB for example and I'm begging you to consider working SB 508.

Please note the attached letter from our Department of Children and Families and thank you.

Office of the Secretary
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Phyllis Gilmore, Secretary

Sam Brownback, Governor

January 7, 2016

Keri Strahler
keri.strahler@gmail.com

Ms. Strahler,

I am writing in response to your question to the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF), received on December 14, 2015, inquiring about any existing grant from DCF to CASA of Sedgwick County for their Truancy Citizen's Review Board.

The grant provided to CASA of Sedgwick County was for \$79,000, but ended on June 30, 2015. The CASA/Roots & Wings program was funded with other State Special Grants, which was 100% SGF. Due to budgetary restraints, DCF was unable to renew the grant for Fiscal Year 2016. DCF values the efforts of CASA and hopes they can secure funds from other sources for Fiscal Year 2016.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Theresa Freed".

Theresa Freed
Director of Communications
Kansas Department for Children and Families
785-296-0537
Theresa.freed@dcf.ks.gov