



Department for Children
and Families

Strong Families Make a Strong Kansas

House Committee on Appropriations

January 31, 2018

Testimony Opposed for HB 2402

Presented by:

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Kansas Department for Children and Families

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Testimony of:

Trisha Thomas, Director of Child Support Services
Kansas Department for Children and Families
Topeka, Kansas

Testimony on:

HB 2402 – Debt set off; allowing the director of accounts and reports to enter into an agreement with third party vendors to assist in collecting debts against the state.

Chairman Waymaster, Vice Chair Campbell, Ranking Member Moore and Members of the Committee:

Good morning, I am Trisha Thomas, Director of Child Support Services (CSS) at the Kansas Department for Children and Families (DCF). I appreciate the opportunity to testify today regarding House Bill 2402.

Currently, the Child Support Services (CSS) program participates in the set-off program referenced by this bill, which collected \$3.78 million in FFY 2017 for families. These funds went to both the households of obligees and to the State of Kansas to pay off obligor's child support arrears. This bill is of great concern to our program in how it will impact our families directly as well as the funding for the program.

HB 2402 requires the Department of Administration (DoA) Director of Accounts and Reports to enter into agreements with third-party vendors to assist in collecting debts against the state. The bill amends K.S.A. 75-6202 to add a definition of "third party vendor" which would allow the Director of Accounts and Reports to enter agreements with anyone to collect State debts. The bill amends K.S.A. 75-6203 to require DoA to provide shared information regarding debtors with the third-party vendors. The information DoA is required to share includes confidential information about child support participants. This information is protected by the federal and State laws. The bill, however, does not have any requirements for third-party vendors to comply with State and federal confidentiality laws or have a provision for CSS to be a required party to agreements between DoA and third-party vendors. Should CSS fail to protect this confidential information, the State could face loss of, or a serious reduction in the amount of, the federal grant under part IV-D of the Social Security Act. Therefore, the child support program would have no choice but to opt out of participating.

If CSS is not able to participate in the set-off program due to data insecurity, the loss will be felt in the homes of obliges, as well as the coffers of the State of Kansas. If this legislation is implemented, State General Funds will need to be identified for the operation of the IV-D program to meet the federal financial requirements.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding this bill today. I will be glad to stand for any questions you may have.