



Kansas CASA Association

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March 19, 2018

**Testimony in Opposition to Senate Bill 401
Presented to the Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs
By Mickey Edwards, State Director, Kansas CASA Association**

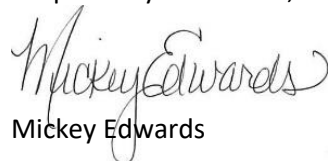
Chairman Estes and Members of the Committee:

With hundreds of children in Kansas in need of families thru adoption, there is a great need for caring adults who want to adopt! Children who age out of foster care are faced with many challenges that children who have caring adults in their lives are not. They are more likely to experience unhealthy outcomes such as homelessness, poverty, incarceration, and poor health. Most transition out of foster care with inadequate life skills and few resources.

Additionally, Kansas is in great need of foster families to provide temporary homes for children in the foster care system. Without additional homes, Kansas' foster care agencies will continue to be forced to place children in series of one-night-at-a-time foster homes and/or stay overnight with children in foster care workers' offices. This instability in placement often means that the child's mental health and education needs go unmet, sometimes further exacerbating the difficulty in finding a more stable foster home for them. CASA programs and their volunteers see the negative effects of instability in placement on the children they serve.

SB 401 would allow for discrimination against LGBTQ individuals and caring adults in same-sex relationships who would like to foster or adopt children involved in the child welfare system. Yet, numerous studies in recent years have shown that children with same-sex parents have just as much chance to thrive and experience the same outcomes as those with parents who are of different genders. Why would we turn away loving, caring adults when already there are not enough families wanting to foster or adopt? We need MORE families to provide homes for Kansas' most vulnerable children, not less.

Respectfully Submitted,



Mickey Edwards

I am for the child™