

SB 293
House Judiciary Committee
WRITTEN TESTIMONY
March 16, 2020
NEUTRAL

Chairman Patton and Members of the Committee,

The Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence (KCSDV) is a statewide non-profit organization whose membership is the 26 sexual and domestic violence programs serving victims across Kansas. KCSDV provides information; training; and analysis and policy work on issues impacting victims of domestic and sexual violence, their families, and their communities.

KCSDV is neutral on the passage of SB 293. KCSDV worked diligently with Secretary of State Ron Thornburgh several years ago to create a viable public safety option for victims of domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking in Kansas. Including Kansas, forty-one (41) states offer residents access to an Address Confidentiality Program (ACP) and the majority of these reside in the Secretary of State's Office. An ACP is designed to offer eligible participants a records protection and mail forwarding service. ACP is most effective when it is used as one part of a larger safety plan aimed at reducing a victim's risk by preventing perpetrators from locating participants through public records such as drivers' licenses, voter registries, and marriage records.

While KCSDV is neutral on this bill, it is important to highlight that most of the existing ACP's across the country reside in Secretary of State's offices for a variety of reasons – one important reason is creating independence for the program from the criminal justice system. Many victims are reluctant to participate in the criminal justice system. With this bill, victims would be required to engage with and share personally identifying information with a criminal justice agency to participate in the ACP. Additionally, both the Secretary of State's office and the Attorney General's office are political posts and subject to change every few years. While both are operating well now there is no ability to predict the future. KCSDV is concerned that by moving the ACP to a criminal justice agency the program will decrease in participation and enrollment; thereby, providing fewer safety options for victims in crisis.

All victims deserve to be safe and have access to unaffiliated protections.

Sincerely submitted on behalf of KCSDV,

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