

Children's Advocacy Centers of Kansas

To: Chairman Wilborn and Members of the Senate Judiciary Committee

From: Kim T Parker on behalf of Children's Advocacy Centers of Kansas

Date: January 22nd, 2020

Re: Proponent Testimony Senate Bill 215

Good Morning Chairman Wilborn and Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony for SB215. I offer this testimony on behalf of the Children's Advocacy Centers of Kansas. SB215 seeks to bring attention to the harm levied upon children who are present during domestic violence crimes. This bill adds to the current child endangerment statute. This statute has long been the law of Kansas and it is designed to protect children from circumstances that threaten and endanger their life body or health. While it may have long been common understanding that it is not good for children to witness violence in their homes, the evidence of the negative effects for children exposed to domestic violence is substantial.

Children who live in homes where there is domestic violence grow up in an environment that is unpredictable, filled with tension and anxiety and dominated by fear. This can lead to significant emotional and psychological trauma, like that experienced by children who are victims of child abuse. Instead of growing up in an emotionally and physically safe, secure, nurturing and predictable environment, these children are forced to worry about the future.

Apart from the emotional, physical, social and behavioral damage abuse creates for children, statistics show that domestic violence can also become a learned behavior. This means that children may grow up to think it is okay to use violence to get what they want and as adults that it is okay for there to be violence in their relationships.

We urge you to pass this important measure for the protection of Kansas children who suffer from acts of Domestic Violence committed in their presence.

Respectfully Submitted

Kim T Parker

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On Behalf of the Children's Advocacy Centers of Kansas

