



## Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

February 21, 2019

### **SB 193**

Written Testimony by:

Ethan Belshe

Legislative Liaison

Kansas Department for Children and Families

Rebekah Gaston, Director of Policy/Director of Economic & Employment Services  
DCF Administration Building, 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
(785) 296-4475 [rebekah.gaston2@ks.gov](mailto:rebekah.gaston2@ks.gov)  
[www.dcf.ks.gov](http://www.dcf.ks.gov)

**Testimony of:**

Ethan Belshe, Legislative Liaison  
Kansas Department for Children and Families

**Testimony on:**

SB 193

**Chairman Suellentrop, Vice Chair Berger, Ranking Member Bollier and Members of the Committee:**

The Department for Children and Families thanks you for this opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Senate Bill 193.

SB 193 would amend the statutes regarding the licensing procedures used by the state's behavioral sciences regulatory board to make it easier for social workers licensed in other states to become licensed to practice in Kansas.

Our state is facing a severe shortage of qualified social workers, and DCF has struggled to maintain the qualified child welfare staff we need to keep up with increasing caseloads. We currently have 16 Child Protection Specialist positions open across the state. We prefer to fill these positions with licensed social workers, but they are also open to unlicensed college graduates with degrees in human services or behavioral sciences.

SB 193 alone won't solve our social worker shortage, but DCF is fully supportive of all efforts to make Kansas a more attractive option for licensed social workers. By removing some of the bureaucratic obstacles involved in the licensing process, we may be able to attract some of the social workers our state so desperately needs.

Thank you for the opportunity to address this important issue.