



January 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021

To: The Public Health & Welfare Committee  
Re: Performance Based Contracting Bill – Senate Bill 12

Good morning Mr. Chairman Senator Richard Hilderbrand, the Vice-Chair Senator Beverly Gossage and Ranking Minority Leader Senator Pat Pettey and members and staff of the Public Health & Welfare Committee.

A quote from Denise Morrison states, “The single most important ingredient in the recipe for success is transparency because transparency builds trust”.

The greatest lessons that have lasted me a lifetime, came from my time serving in the United States Army. Throughout my time in the military, I learned the importance of being accountable and transparent because the lives of my fellow soldiers and unit were at stake. I also learned that there may be things required of me as a soldier that I did not like but I had to comply for the betterment of everyone because it was not about me.

I am Min. Nina Shaw-Woody, LMSW and I am the Executive Director of Kansas Family Advisory Network aka KFAN. KFAN is an outreach organization and ministry designed to serve Kansas families who need help and who may be at-risk of, or are involved in, our Kansas child welfare system. The demographics of people we target to assist are relative caregivers, non-related kin caregivers and birth parents. We strive to help the children of Kansas by providing Support, Education, Advocacy and Training to caregivers to help empower them to break negative actions and behaviors as well as equip and empower them to do whatever they need to do for their families to bring about positive change. This includes parenting classes, advocacy, free food and clothing as well as mental health and spiritual services.

I am before you today in support of Senate Bill 12 that was reintroduced to this committee by Sen. Oletha Faust-Goudeau for two reasons, first transparency and trust and second our Kansas families. In order to build trust in any relationship you must first be willing to be humble yourself and that includes being transparent. In the interest of truly providing the services our Kansas families need across our diverse state, in my opinion, a continued effort to strengthen the relationship between our legislators who represent Kansans and the Department of Children and Families (DCF), who exist to serve Kansans.

To effectively bring about the change our Kansas families need, Kansas legislators need to know and understand what is working and what is not and then produce legislation that will allow DCF the freedom to do what they need to do in order to make concrete differences in the lives of Kansans.

Under this new DCF administration and with the assistance of the Family First Initiative, DCF has been steadily striving to incorporate evidence-based and promising prevention and intervention services. From my standpoint as a community partner who works with the demographics this bill is desiring to represent, I have seen and work in collaboration with DCF staff across the state who have a sincere desire to ensure the work DCF and contracting community partners and stakeholders are providing to and for families are beneficial as well as producing results. As a result of this, DCF has kept more families together and reduced the need for out of home placements.

DCF's current practice model is all about strengthening the family! DCF is striving for Kansas to become a Kin friendly state. This work and belief system includes not only DCF but contracting community partners and stakeholders. This work seeks to assure the safety and well-being of not only the child but the entire family.

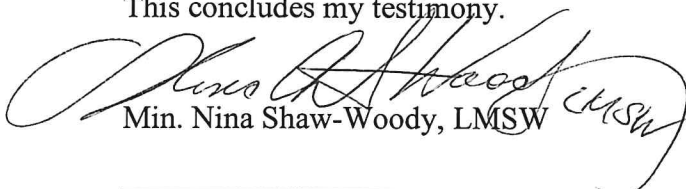
One important thing to remember is that not all programs/service models have a rating for evidence-based and/or promising but they may still be effective and beneficial. One such program that DCF has been implementing is Kevin Campbell's Family Finding program which helps to find and connect foster children to their family members or other adults who love and care about the child. Identifying healthy connections and loving family members can improve reunification rates, improve placement stability and help the child has family connection when transitioning out of foster care. Healing from trauma also happens within these relationships.

This program challenges child welfare professionals to think out of the box. It would be important that this bill would allow grant DCF the freedom as well as trust DCF to make decisions regarding programs. DCF continually researches and reviews programs that may not be evidence-based or considered promising from a clearinghouse. DCF goal is to provide services that may still be/are beneficial to children and families across Kansas.

My mother use to tell me, when I turn 18 that she could not tell me what to do anymore but all she could do was advise me. My hope and prayer that this bill would allow this committee to help guide but not take over. It is also important to have legislators who are knowledgeable about Kansas child welfare system. Community partners, stakeholders and DCF must be willing to be transparent to produce trust on behalf of the legislators but legislators must also be willing to be transparent to produce trust on behalf of the community partners, stakeholders and DCF. This will allow everyone to move in a forward and upward motion on behalf of our children and families of Kansas.

Thank you for the opportunity to share with you today and may God continue to bless the work you all are doing.

This concludes my testimony.

  
Min. Nina Shaw-Woody, LMSW