

Written Testimony of:

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Kansas Department for Children and Families

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Written Testimony on:

Senate Bill 155 – To expand newborn screening services and increasing transfers from the medical assistance fee fund to the Kansas newborn screening fund

Chair Hilderbrand and Members of Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare:

Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (KCDHH) supports SB 155 which seeks to expand newborn screening services and increasing transfers from the medical assistance fee fund to the Kansas newborn screening fund.

KCDHH is a state agency housed administratively within the Department for Children and Families (DCF) and based in Topeka. KCDHH works with agencies and organizations throughout Kansas to assure availability and coordination of services for people who are deaf and hard of hearing, including communication access and resources related to hearing loss.

KCDHH is governed by a 17-member Commission, of which there are five ex-officio members representing key state agencies and twelve at-large members appointed by the Governor. Since 1982, the Commission has provided policy considerations relating to social, emotional, educational and vocational needs of the deaf and hard of hearing and their families and makes recommendations for needed improvements, while serving as an advisory board on new legislation affecting the deaf and hard of hearing. The considerations taken and expressed by KCDHH do not necessarily represent the views or positions of DCF or individual agency members.

KCDHH is proud to be among the original proponents in creating the Early Hearing Detection and Identification (EHDI) screening program in 1994. KCDHH through years has collaborated with the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE)'s SoundBeginnings program, even during consolidation of all newborn screening components under one umbrella. Early detection, identification and early intervention services are an important investment the State can make, and, through referrals, the overall newborn screening program can have a huge positive impact on many related programs such as the Language Assessment Program (LAP) for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children, which KCDHH oversees while KSD administers the program.

Without adequate investment in the fee fund that supports the Kansas newborn screening fund, we as the State would face negative ramifications to these important programs, especially regarding the cost of future services as these children grow up, becoming adults without early support and intervention services. Thank you for your continuing support of newborn screening program.