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Brenda Bandy  
Executive Director, Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition  
Proponent Verbal Testimony on SB 489  
Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare

RE: Nursery Program for Incarcerated Moms (SB 489)

Chair Gossage and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of the Nursery Program for Incarcerated Moms (SB 489).

The Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition is a statewide non-profit working collaboratively with state agencies, public health, hospitals, employers, child care providers, and others to improve breastfeeding support for the over 90% of Kansas families who choose to breastfeed. The evidence is clear that both mom and baby benefit from breastfeeding. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends breastfeeding for at least two years and beyond if possible.

There is a group of moms and babies in Kansas whose breastfeeding is measured in hours, not years. Incarcerated moms and their newborn babies are only able to breastfeed for the short time they are in the hospital after birth, an average of 24-48 hours for most. The newborn baby leaves with a caregiver. The incarcerated mom leaves without her baby. A fortunate few moms will be able to express their breast milk for their baby. A dedicated volunteer will pick it up and pay to ship it to the baby's caregiver. But this is rare.

Imagine a time when the baby and mom could leave the hospital together, and both could continue to receive the full benefit of continued breastfeeding and each other's presence. This committee can make that a reality for moms at the Topeka Correctional Facility (TCF) by passing SB 489 and establishing the Nursery Program for Incarcerated Moms at TCF.

Evidence from other state nursery programs in prisons shows the positive benefits to moms, babies, the prison system, and society. Nursery programs in prisons:

- **Reduced recidivism**
- **Breaking the cycle** – better longer-term developmental outcomes—including reduced criminal justice involvement-- for children.
- **Cost savings** – Nebraska estimates a cost savings of more than \$6 million from 1994–2012.
- **Healthier moms** – breastfeeding inmates are more likely to eat better and take better care of themselves, knowing their bodies are making food for their babies.

The KBC urges this committee to pass SB 489 and allow eligible mothers and their children at TCF a chance to restart their lives while at TCF.

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**Mission** To improve the health and well-being of Kansans by working collaboratively to promote, protect and support breastfeeding/human milk feeding.

**Vision** Breastfeeding/human milk feeding is normal and supported throughout Kansas.

Thank you for the opportunity to share this testimony with you today. Feel free to contact me if you have any questions at [bbandy@ksbreastfeeding.org](mailto:bbandy@ksbreastfeeding.org).

Sincerely,



Brenda Bandy, IBCLC

Executive Director

Kansas Breastfeeding Coalition

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