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STATE OF KANSAS
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COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

CHAIR: Welfare Reform
MEMBER: Taxation
Energy, Utilities, and
Communication

March 22nd, 2023

Re: HB 2141

To: Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare
From: Representative Francis Awerkamp, 61st District

Mr. Chairman and Committee,

Thank you for the hearing on HB 2141 and for allowing me to testify.

HB 2141 will require non-custodial parents to cooperate with child support services in order to receive food assistance welfare. The bill was amended in the House Welfare Reform Committee to specify when cooperation must be considered, and also to clarify the meaning of delinquent with regards to child support.

Current statute is interpreted to only require the custodial parent to cooperate with child support services. In the unfortunate circumstances when both parents are not caring for their children, this bill would ensure that the non-custodial parent must cooperate with child support in order to receive food welfare.

The bill does add a process to the application and redetermination for welfare benefits, which comes with a cost. The requirement and encouragement to pay child support in order to remain on food welfare can potentially help children and their custodial parent with the support they need, as well as continue what is hoped to be a responsible and positive connection between the non-custodial parent and their child. I do hope the results are worth the cost and additional effort by DCF.

Please keep in mind that DCF has flexibility to determine "good cause" for non-compliance and can continue the food welfare when finding good cause.

Respectfully,

Francis Awerkamp

District 61