



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL
AND REHABILITATION SERVICES

Don Jordan, Secretary

Senate Ways and Means Committee

February 4, 2009

SB 128 – Fatherhood Initiative

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Chairman Emler and members of the committee, I am Don Jordan, Secretary of SRS. Thank you for the opportunity to provide information on Senate Bill 128. This bill would direct SRS to establish a fatherhood initiative program, subject to appropriations, to encourage the formation and continuation of relationships between fathers and children.

The objectives outlined in this bill are to support fathers, regardless of marital or economic status, in building and maintaining relationships with their children, including fatherhood responsibilities, early paternity establishment, fostering emotional connections and financial support, integrating state and local services for families; and building fathers' parenting skills, behaviors, and attitudes.

Currently, fatherhood efforts are promoted and supported in a variety of ways, including promoting father-friendly practices in Head Start and other community programs. SRS, the Kansas Head Start Association and the Kansas Parent Information Resource Center collaborated in 2008 to develop and distribute a statewide Fatherhood Directory. Also, a statewide fatherhood summit occurs annually in Kansas, providing a forum for parental education and networking and furnishing tools and information on how to build community fatherhood programs. The Parent Leadership Conference is also held annually to assist fathers in learning how to advocate for their children on the local, state and federal level.

If this bill is passed, SRS would work through grants to local communities to support new initiatives and programs that address these goals.

This concludes my testimony and I would be glad to answer any questions the committee may have.