



DCF Legislative Testimony

February 19, 2024

TESTIMONY OF: Department for Children and Families

TESTIMONY ON: HB 2772- Establishing the Kansas Indian child welfare act and providing additional requirements for child custody proceedings involving an Indian child.

DCF | HB 2772 | WRITTEN ONLY NEUTRAL

Chair Concannon and members of the committee. Thank you for the opportunity to provide neutral testimony on HB 2772, a bill establishing the Kansas Indian Child Welfare Act.

HB 2772, establishing the Kansas Indian Child Welfare Act, incorporates provisions of the federal law (Indian Child Welfare Act) into Kansas law and includes additional provisions that strengthen and facilitate working relationships with our tribal partners in our shared goal to protect and strengthen children, families, and adults.

The Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) is a federal law that was passed by Congress in 1978 in response to the alarmingly high number of Indian children that were being removed from their homes from both public and private agencies. The ICWA governs child custody proceedings that involve an Indian child, providing heightened standards in such proceedings that ensure the best interests of Indian children.

The Kansas Department for Children and Families recognizes the continuing and compelling governmental interest of sovereign tribal nations in their children. The Department supports the federal policy underlying ICWA to protect the best interests of Indian children and to promote the stability and security of Indian tribes and Indian families by establishing minimum federal standards to prevent arbitrary and unnecessary removal of Indian children from their families and tribes.

The Kansas Department for Children and Families currently work with Kansas tribal nations in shared efforts to ensure the safety and well-being of Indian children in the custody of the Secretary and that tribal resources are quickly identified and utilized. The Department for Children and Families will continue to be responsive to the federal and state requirements for Indian children and families and look forward to further collaborating and working with our tribal partners in these efforts.

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide testimony on HB 2772.