

Dear Senator Suellentrop and Members of the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee,

My name is Angie Hadley. I am the Program Coordinator of the Restorative Justice Authority for the 11<sup>th</sup> Judicial District Crawford County. I would like to take a moment to share my concerns regarding the Executive Reorganization Order (ERO). I would ask the Legislators to consider the following concerns before making a decision:

- When the Juvenile Justice Authority (now known as the Kansas Department of Corrections-Juvenile Services (KDOC-JS)) was developed, as a result of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 1997, and amended by House Substitute for Senate Bill 69, the goal was to create two separate agencies to serve youth in the State of Kansas. The Juvenile Justice Authority would work with juvenile offenders and Department for Children and Families (DCF) with children in need of care. Our agency the Restorative Justice Authority (RJA) is the local division of KDOC-JS.
- When this reform was initiated, it was in large part because DCF did not have the ability to handle juvenile offenders. In Crawford County, when DCF (SRS at the time) transitioned cases to the Juvenile Justice Authority (JJA), There was no transition, no explanation or communication given when the files were handed over
- Many court orders had not been communicated to the providers or completed. Youth ordered in out of home placements were placed in home and many evaluations or other court orders were not completed. I realize this was years ago but it is important to understand how the transition took place and why confidence in DCF is lacking.
- JJA worked hard both at the state and local levels to develop strong working relations with stakeholders, law enforcement and our courts, etc. by developing solid policies and practices to best serve youth.
- Since then, JJA has been placed under KDOC-JS and we have benefited greatly from KDOC's adult division. Programs proven to be effective in reducing offender risk with the adult population have trickled to juvenile services. In many instances utilizing the same KDOC training staff.
- KDOC-JS has made great strides with standards, policy and procedure, evidence-based programming for offenders, quality assurance and fidelity. We are also looking at the research with SB 367 to make improvements necessary to be successful. We have been held accountable at the state level to implement supervision and services that best meet our youth's needs. This guidance and knowledge have been paramount in the enhancement of services state-wide
- With the Secretary of DCF being appointed to run this new division, many believe these initiatives to include experienced oversight and accountability may be jeopardized. There have been numerous problems statewide with DCF contractors.

- Locally, when Kaw Valley Center (KVC) was awarded the contract for foster care, they were held in contempt of court on a number of occasions in Crawford County. This led to serious mistrust by the court system, but yet Kaw Valley was allowed to maintain the contract through DCF until 2019. Since the original reform in 1997 not much has changed with DCF and confidence is still lacking.
- In recent years the state proposed to take Juvenile Intake and Assessment (JIAS) from KDOC-JS and place it under DCF. Law enforcement protested forcing a reconsideration because they did not believe DCF contactors would take responsibility for youth or could be reached afterhours and weekends. JIAS was left under KDOC-JS. This belief was based upon years of difficulty with the agency.
- Local agencies and stakeholders were blindsided by the ERO.
- Having 6 months to plan for a new agency is not a lot of time to develop a well thought out collaborative plan.
- Since the ERO was presented there have been a number of mixed messages. Local KDOC-JS directors were contacted by Tanya Keys, DCF Executive Director and asked what questions we had about the ERO. During those conversations we were told there would be no changes; offices, budgets and positions will remain the same. However, when Secretary Howard presented her testimony on January 30, 2020 she stated during the question and comments that they would be looking at combined budgets in 2021, where and how agencies can be brought together and not duplicating positions.
- The leadership structure for the new agency did not include any leadership from KDOC-JS. Will KDOC-JS and DCF have equal administrators or will a DCF administrator be over the new agency? Losing highly qualified juvenile services personnel would only weaken any accomplishments and progression already witnessed under KDOC-JS.
- On page 12 of the ERO, it states; internal management P&P, standards, facility orders, rules and regulations, programs will be transferred to KDHS until revised, amended, revoked or nullified pursuant to law. This language makes me question if the work we have put in to SB 367 will be sustained. Would youth and families get the evidence-based practices we are providing now or would these services be contracted out to separate entities, causing delays with our children and families and curriculum fidelity concerns. What about the trained staff who are currently providing these services and the money spent to train them?
- On page 14 of the ERO, it states; KDOC-JS positions will be transferred unless the secretary determines that some officers or employees are not performing necessary services. They can convert vacant classified positions to positions that are unclassified. This seems to contradict the previous message received that there will be no organizational changes with KDOC-JS.

- Child in Need of Care (CINC) and Juvenile Offenders have different issues and needs. Standards and supervision for offenders is unique and needs to be for the safety of our community as well as the youth we serve.
- One consideration may be, since Secretary Howard is over both DCF and KDADS start by combining those agencies to see if the Legislators get desired results before determining whether KDOC-JS should be disrupted.
- I would encourage representatives to reach out to law enforcement officers, judges and court personnel and gain feedback regarding this situation and the changes that will ultimately affect their day to day operations before a final decision is made.
- I would ask if this proposal is truly about combining juvenile services and creating strong community partners that focus on prevention and providing a resource hub, as we have been told, why has Court Services-Juvenile Services been exempt from the reorganization?
- Because this is an initiative from Governor Kelly some people/agencies who oppose the ERO are afraid to speak their truth for fear of losing their jobs. While we have faith in many of her decisions, this one we do not see as beneficial to the youth or families we have successfully served. The expediency of this ERO proposal has the ability to cause more harm and disruption than good.

I would ask KDOC-JS be left under KDOC and allow us to continue making great strides forward to best serve our communities with best practices, experienced leadership and guidance.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,



Angie Hadley

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