

FISCAL FOCUS

Budget and Tax Policy in  Perspective

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Legislative Testimony - House Bill 2201
House Judiciary Committee
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Kansas Action for Children is a not-for-profit child advocacy organization founded in 1979. For more than 30 years, KAC has worked with lawmakers on policy solutions that improve the lives of Kansas children and their families.

We support House Bill 2201, which would strengthen current law as it relates to child support enforcement for parents holding professional licenses.

The Importance of Child Support

Child support is a critical source of support for many Kansas children growing up in single-parent households. As we look at ways to assist vulnerable Kansans with limited state and federal dollars, it is clear that child support is an effective and efficient support.

At the child development level, children whose noncustodial parents pay child support have more contact with them, potentially providing the children with emotional as well as financial support. Research indicates that children with parental contact have better grades, better test scores, fewer behavior problems, and they remain in school longer. Children living in single-parent homes with only one parent involved the child's life are at risk of a host of negative outcomes including being more likely: to experience health and behavioral problems, to become a teenage parent, to live in poverty, and to run away from home.

The Cost to the State of Child Support Non-Compliance

When custodial parents don't receive child support, often the result is a need for state and federal assistance such as TANF, food stamps and Medicare. In addition to these immediate costs, the state may incur increased juvenile and criminal court costs, special education costs and mental health costs associated with the financial and developmental impact of living in a single-parent household with only one involved parent.

The Reason for Child Support Arrearages

Although there are numerous reasons for inconsistent or no child support payments, common themes emerge. There are certain child support debtors who are very difficult for the state to communicate with and even locate. These debtors included parents with a sporadic work history, who are self-employed, or receive their wages in cash.

House Bill 2201

House Bill 2201 will strengthen current law relating to compliance with child support orders by parents holding professional licenses, and make the use of professional license sanctions more effective as an incentive to pay child support. We urge your support of House Bill 2201 as a way to increase compliance with child support orders in Kansas and ultimately improve child well-being for Kansas children in single-parent households.