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Oral Testimony in Support of HB 2638
House Committee on Child Welfare and Foster Care

Chair Howerton, Ranking Member Ousley, and Members of the Committee on Child Welfare and Foster Care,

Thank you for this opportunity to provide testimony on behalf of Kansas Appleseed in support of HB 2638. The bill would require DCF caseworkers to present and explain the Representative Gail Finney Memorial Foster Care Bill of Rights (FCBR) to every foster child in an age-appropriate manner.¹

Kansas Appleseed is a well-regarded advocate for humane, evidence-based foster care reforms. The passage of the FCBR was a significant step forward in the ongoing efforts to resolve crises in the foster care system because the rights helped to clearly define and center the needs of foster youth. HB 2638 would strengthen this progress by empowering foster youth with the knowledge of how they deserve to be treated and how to report maltreatment.

Many foster youth continue to experience inadequate treatment. Nearly 10 percent of foster youth in Kansas are placed in non-family settings, despite the FCBR's clear preference for family-based placements.² Children also experience placement changes on average every 143 days, undermining their right to stability.³ And while foster youth are guaranteed the right to report violations without fear of retaliation, that protection is meaningless if youth are never informed that the right exists.⁴ It is a disservice to Representative Gail Finney's legacy and the children in foster care to let them navigate this complex system unaware of their rights. HB 2638 will correct this injustice.

By notifying foster youth of their rights, HB 2638 equips them to hold bad actors accountable. Identifying maltreatment, such as abuse and neglect, requires an understanding of what safe

¹ H.B. 2638. 2025 Biennium. 2026 Reg. Sess. (Kansas 2026).
https://www.kslegislature.gov/li/b2025_26/measures/hb2638/

² Kansas Department for Children and Families. (2025). Placement in Family Like Setting SFY2026. Topeka, KS.; Kansas Department for Children and Families. (2023). *The Representative Gail Finney Memorial Foster Care Bill of Rights*. Foster Youth Bill of Rights.
<https://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/PPS/Pages/FosterYouthBoR.aspx>

³ Kansas Department for Children and Families. (2023). *The Representative Gail Finney Memorial Foster Care Bill of Rights*. Foster Youth Bill of Rights.
<https://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/PPS/Pages/FosterYouthBoR.aspx>; Kansas Department for Children and Families. (2025). Placement Stability: Rate per 1,000 days in Foster Care SFY2026. Topeka, KS.

⁴ Kansas Department for Children and Families. (2023). *The Representative Gail Finney Memorial Foster Care Bill of Rights*. Foster Youth Bill of Rights.
<https://www.dcf.ks.gov/services/PPS/Pages/FosterYouthBoR.aspx>

and appropriate placement looks like and a clear mechanism for reporting violations. The FCBR provides those standards and protections—but only if foster youth are made aware of them.

Ultimately, HB 2638 bridges the gap between the FCBR and the foster youth it was written to help. The legislature enacted Representative Finney's legacy in 2023 with unanimous support in both chambers. I hope it is with the same enthusiasm that this body passes HB 2638.

Thank you for your time,

Brenna Visocsky