

Kansas Department of

# **Social and Rehabilitation Services**

Gary Daniels, Secretary

**Federal and State Affairs Committee**

February 13, 2006

**HB 2306 - Protection and Advocacy Fund**

**Integrated Service Delivery**

Gary Daniels, Secretary

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**HB 2306 - Protection and Advocacy Fund**

Chairman Edmonds and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding HB 2306 which creates funding for use in advocating and prosecuting criminal and civil actions taken against persons with disabilities. The funding would be used to coordinate the efforts of the Attorney General's office and the protection and advocacy system for disabled Kansans, primarily administered through the Disability Rights Center (DRC).

The Department provides adult protective services to help safeguard the well being and general welfare of adults (age 18 and older) in need of protection from abuse, neglect, exploitation or fiduciary abuse. SRS social workers investigate reports and provide protective services to adults, including elderly and disabled adults, who reside in the community and in facilities licensed/certified by SRS.

Over 5,000 instances of abuse, neglect, exploitation and fiduciary abuse were investigated in FY 2005. Nearly 1,200 of these cases were confirmed; 75 percent of these were confirmed for self-neglect. Less than 10 percent of investigated cases are referred to law enforcement. An equal proportion of investigations involve individuals over and under the age of 60. The Department works with numerous partners including law enforcement, local attorneys, Area Agencies on Aging, Community Mental Health Centers, local medical providers, and community organizations and advocates to investigate and offer protective services .

We support the concept proposed in this legislation and view it as an enhancement to the current system to protect vulnerable adults. Development of a system that offers a strong link to civil and criminal prosecution of cases confirmed of abuse, neglect, or exploitation provides an additional resource to staff.

SRS has developed a more collaborative relationship with both the DRC and the Attorney General's office as we work towards the common goal of improving the safety of vulnerable adults in Kansas. If this bill is enacted, a more formalized documentation of the partnership will be needed to further define roles and prevent duplication of effort.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony.