

Testimony on HB 2336
to
The House Corrections and Juvenile Justice Committee

By Ray Roberts
Secretary
Kansas Department of Corrections
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The Kansas Department of Corrections supports HB 2336. HB 2336 amends K.S.A. 38-2361 and 38-2369 to require a sentencing court to administer a risk assessment tool prior to sentencing a juvenile offender to either a detention center, house arrest, custody to the secretary for out of home placement, sanctions house or juvenile correctional facility.

Last year K.S.A. 38-2360 was amended to require that a standardized risk assessment tool be used as a part of a presentence investigation report prepared by a court services officer. Training of court services officers in the administration of a risk assessment tool was conducted statewide. However, K.S.A. 38-2360 does not require that a sentencing court order a presentence investigation report, and in practice many courts do not. This limits the frequency of the use of the risk assessment tool.

Requiring the administration of a standardized risk tool prior to the placement of youth in deep end system placements is supported by the Department and is aligned with best practices in juvenile justice. Providing all judges with results of a standardized and risk/needs assessment tool will give valuable information to aid in sentencing options for youth. It will also provide valuable guidance regarding the services and programs which will address youths' needs and how to best reduce risk factors.

The Department urges favorable consideration of HB 2336.