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Governor Kelly Signs Gail Finney Memorial Foster Care Bill of Rights

TOPEKA – Today, Governor Laura Kelly signed [House Bill 2024](#), a child welfare bill that establishes the Gail Finney Memorial Foster Care Bill of Rights outlining the rights of foster youth, foster parents, and family caregivers.

“I am pleased to sign this bill into law not only to empower our youth and families in our foster care system, but to honor the legacy of one of our state’s great leaders, Representative Gail Finney. She was a warrior for our children – particularly those from underrepresented and minority communities -- and worked tirelessly to improve foster care in our state,” **said Governor Laura Kelly.**

“I was not previously acquainted with Gail Finney the legislator. I was a friend of Gail Finney the person. Now that I’ve had an opportunity to walk the halls of the statehouse and hear from those who are now my colleagues, who had the pleasure of knowing Gail as a legislator, I realize there was absolutely no distinguishing between the two,” **said Representative Ford Carr.** “What a fitting tribute it is to my friend for this body to name the ‘Gail Finney Foster Care Bill of Rights’ in her honor and my privilege to carry the torch of her legacy so that I might continue to be the voice for those without the ability to speak as loudly for themselves.”

“For too long, those most impacted by the foster care system – our kids – lacked the resources they needed to protect themselves,” **said Representative Susan Concannon.** “Establishing a Foster Care Bill of Rights solves that problem. I am pleased by this bipartisan effort to come together to honor Representative Gail Finney, who fought for a more just foster care system, in such a fitting way.”

HB 2024 also strengthens and sustains the Child Abuse Referral Evaluation (CARE) network, an existing program that ensures every case of child maltreatment is thoroughly investigated. The bill also allows for the use of infant safety devices in authorized facilities.

“This legislation will save lives,” **said Dr. Emily Killough and Dr. Jennifer Hansen on behalf of the Kansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics.** “HB 2024 allows a child abuse medical expert to review case information for each alleged child abuse and neglect report for children under 6 to help identify which children may benefit from a medical evaluation. And, it will expand the medical network allowing more children to receive medical care in their own communities. We would like to thank Governor Kelly and the Kansas legislature for their commitment to keeping Kansas children safe and healthy.”

In addition to House Bill 2024, Governor Kelly signed three other bipartisan bills, including:

House Bill 2346: Creates the “Back the Blue” and city of Topeka license plates and allows distinctive license plates to be personalized.

House Bill 2298: Designates a portion of Interstate 435 as the Officer Donald Burton Gamblin Jr. memorial highway and a portion of U.S. 69 as the Robert Lessen memorial highway.

House Bill 2059: Amends several provisions of the Kansas Liquor Control Act, the Kansas Cereal Malt Beverage Act, and the Club and Drinking Establishment Act. The bill also permits restaurants to allow dogs in outside areas on their premises and allows dogs in microbreweries upon meeting specific conditions.

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