

The Cost of Not Preventing Child Abuse

A Position Paper

By

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Each year in this country, more than three million children are reported as abused or neglected with close to 1,100 of these children dying. A Conservative estimate of \$94 billion is the annual cost of child abuse and neglect in the United States based on 1996 studies, according to a 2001 copyrighted report by Suzette Fromm, found on the Prevent Child Abuse America website. Applying the Consumer Price Index conversion factor for 2005, this cost would be \$115.9 billion, without considering any increase (or decrease) in cases.

(See appendix A regarding applying the consumer price index)

A.R.E.A.'s mission is to help recognize and end abuse and its long term consequences for the human family by focusing on these dimensions of abuse:

Emotional/Psychological—A.R.E.A. seeks to educate society regarding the lasting effects child abuse has on a survivor's body, mind, and spirit.

Legal—A.R.E.A. seeks to change the statute of limitations to enable survivors to pursue legal remedies for the devastating lifelong effects that occur from child abuse.

Physical/Medical—A.R.E.A. seeks change in the law so that perpetrators are held liable for the financial burden of any and all treatment incurred by their acts of abuse.

Sexual—A.R.E.A. seeks to educate society on the social and political importance of respectfully and sensitively upholding, protecting and validating the dignity of all survivors.

Societal—A.R.E.A. seeks to educate society about all child abuse and its devastating consequences, both financial and emotional.

Spiritual—A.R.E.A. seeks to teach that damage to an individual's spirit occurs when any form of abuse takes place.

We believe that education and legislation regarding the long term effects of child abuse, could, over time, be deterrents to these financially and emotionally devastating acts.

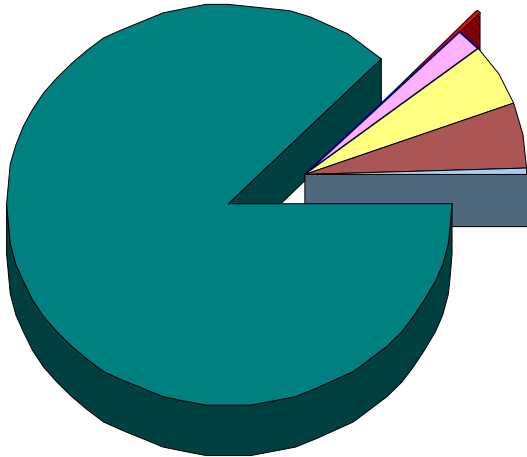
The proposed legislation has 2 facets:

- (1) Criminal legislation that recognizes incest as a level 1 felony.
- (2) Civil legislation that (a) extends the statute of limitations for bringing suit against the perpetrator of child abuse, and (b) requires the perpetrator to pay for costs incurred by survivors and, ultimately, by society because of that abuse.

A.R.E.A. believes that the cost of not preventing child abuse far exceeds the costs that would be incurred if the civil legislation we propose were enacted.

The following cost data has two emphases: (1) costs incurred because of abuse of today’s children; and, (2) costs incurred because of abuse in years past to today’s adult survivors.

STATE OF KANSAS: ECONOMIC ANALYSIS--CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT



TYPE OF SERVICE	COST
Medical Spending	\$ 2,916,000.00
Mental Health	\$ 23,159,000.00
Victim Work/School Loss	\$ 21,780,000.00
Public Programs	\$9,087,000.00
Property Damage	\$ 60,000.00
Total Monetary	\$ 57,002,000.00
Quality of Life	\$ 381,150,000.00
Total Comprehensive	\$ 438,152,000.00

See appendix B for definitions of “types of service”.

The above cost analysis was taken in part from the Economics and Data Analysis Resource Center of the Children’s Safety Network. The center helps public health professionals assess injury-related problems and risks, set priorities, analyze legislation and advocate for improvements, and evaluate injury prevention programs. The center's analyses are frequently used to shape policy and legislation at federal and state levels.

This information is based on the actual number of child abuse and neglect cases that were worked in the state of Kansas in the year 1996 and has been updated using the consumer price index to reflect 2005 dollars. In no way does this include the abused and neglected children who are UNREPORTED. Several estimates show that as few as 1 in 5 cases are reported. **To give you just a sampling of current abuse cases reported:**

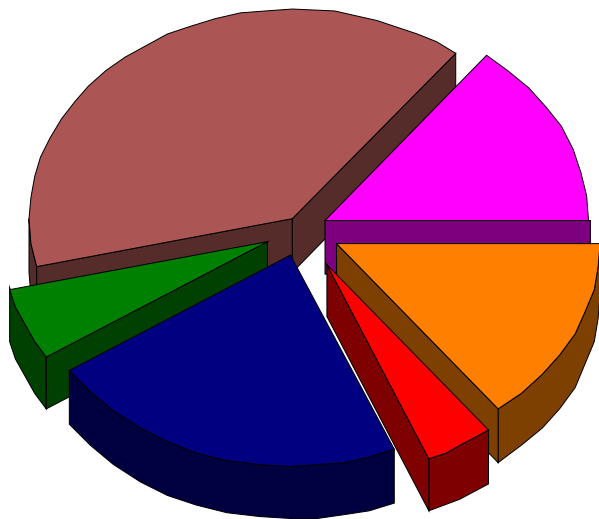
The Mental Health Center of East Central Kansas, serving 7 counties, reported 1,765 open/active cases, both adult and children, in August, 2005. Of these, 710 (over 40%) were being treated for abuse-related issues. You can find out what the figures are for your constituents by contacting the mental health centers serving your area.

KANSAS COUNTIES: REPORTED CASES OF CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT IN 2003 PER 1000 CHILDREN (see appendix C for figures of all 105 Kansas counties)

Total number of children in Kansas in 2002 under age 18 as cited by the Child Welfare League of America, www.cwla.org. **714,000**

Kansas average reported cases child abuse/neglect in 2003 according to Kansas Action for Children-member of National Association Child Advocates: **59.8children/1000.**

KANSAS SURROUNDING STATES: CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT



STATE	TOTAL COMPREHENSIVE COST
Colorado	\$ 1,159,712,400.00
Illinois	\$ 3,097,963,000.00
Kansas	\$ 438,152,000.00
Missouri	\$ 1,757,222,500.00
Nebraska	\$ 330,818,840.00
Oklahoma	\$ 1,138,416,400.00

The total cost of child abuse and neglect in Kansas and the surrounding states exceeded 6.5 billion dollars annually in 1996. In 2005 dollars, the total for the same number of cases would approach 8 billion dollars. Taxpayers bear much of the burden of these costs. It is imperative that concerned lawmakers, civic leaders, educators, and willing citizens recognize the epidemic proportions of abuse and move forward with initiatives that begin to force perpetrators to pay for these escalating costs.

CONCLUSION:

A.R.E.A. seeks to recognize and end abuse and its long term consequences to the human family. We are committed to attacking abuse through comprehensive programs of education and advocacy. In the United States this year, childhood abuse and neglect will cost taxpayers over 115 billion dollars. In Kansas and the five surrounding states, we will be forced to spend over 8 billion dollars attempting to put back together lives that have been destroyed by this rising epidemic. In Kansas alone, we will spend over 400 million dollars. It is time to recognize the burden we as taxpayers are unfairly bearing in the fight against this violence. It is time to recognize that this burden must be shifted to the individuals who perpetrate these heinous crimes against children. Perpetrators must pay in much the same way as absentee fathers are made to pay child support.

While it is time to shift the burden of cost to those who perpetrate crimes, A.R.E.A. recognizes that the total cost of childhood abuse and neglect can not be measured in dollars and cents. It is impossible to quantify the devastation and emotional trauma suffered by even one victim. For this reason, A.R.E.A. seeks to break the cycle of abuse that is often times perpetrated from generation to generation. We urge concerned and conscientious people to stand with adult survivors of childhood abuse as advocates for education and awareness of the problems of childhood abuse. A.R.E.A. seeks to engage concerned leaders in raising awareness of spiritual, emotional/psychological, sexual, physical/medical, and legal fields of expertise in rigorous educational programs that will ultimately break the downward spiral that results from societal ignorance of this issue.

APPLYING THE CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (CPI)

The consumer price index conversion factor has been applied to the 1996 dollar figures in this report in an attempt to equate 2005 dollars. We feel, however, that this still gives an understated picture of the current day cost ramifications of child abuse and should be viewed only as an estimate for the following reasons:

1. These figures are based on reported cases only. It is commonly believed that only about 1 in 5 cases are reported.
2. The CPI is a percentage applied evenly across the board to a number of consumer costs and while this brings us closer to today's figures it does not recognize that some costs, such as costs in the health industry, have grown more rapidly than other costs.

If we are to seriously look at the savings to the abused, their families, and, society in general, that could occur over the long term with legislation designed to make the perpetrator pay and, eventually, reduce the incidences of child abuse, we must recognize that the figures in this report, staggering though they are, in reality are even higher than stated.

DEFINITIONS FOR KANSAS “TYPES OF SERVICE”

The following definitions were taken from the Economics and Data Analysis Resource Center of the Children’s Safety Network and can be viewed at the source at <http://www.edarc.org/pubs/can/ks-can.htm>.

Medical Care includes payments for hospital and physician care, as well as emergency medical transport, rehabilitation, prescriptions, allied health services, medical devices, insurance claims processing and coroner and premature burial costs when fatalities were involved.

Mental Health Care includes payments for services by psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, pastoral counselors, and insurance claims processing.

Future Earnings (Victim Work/School Loss) includes wages, fringe benefits, schoolwork, and housework lost by the injured. This estimate excludes earnings lost by family and friends caring for the injured.

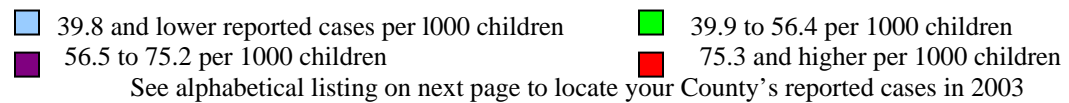
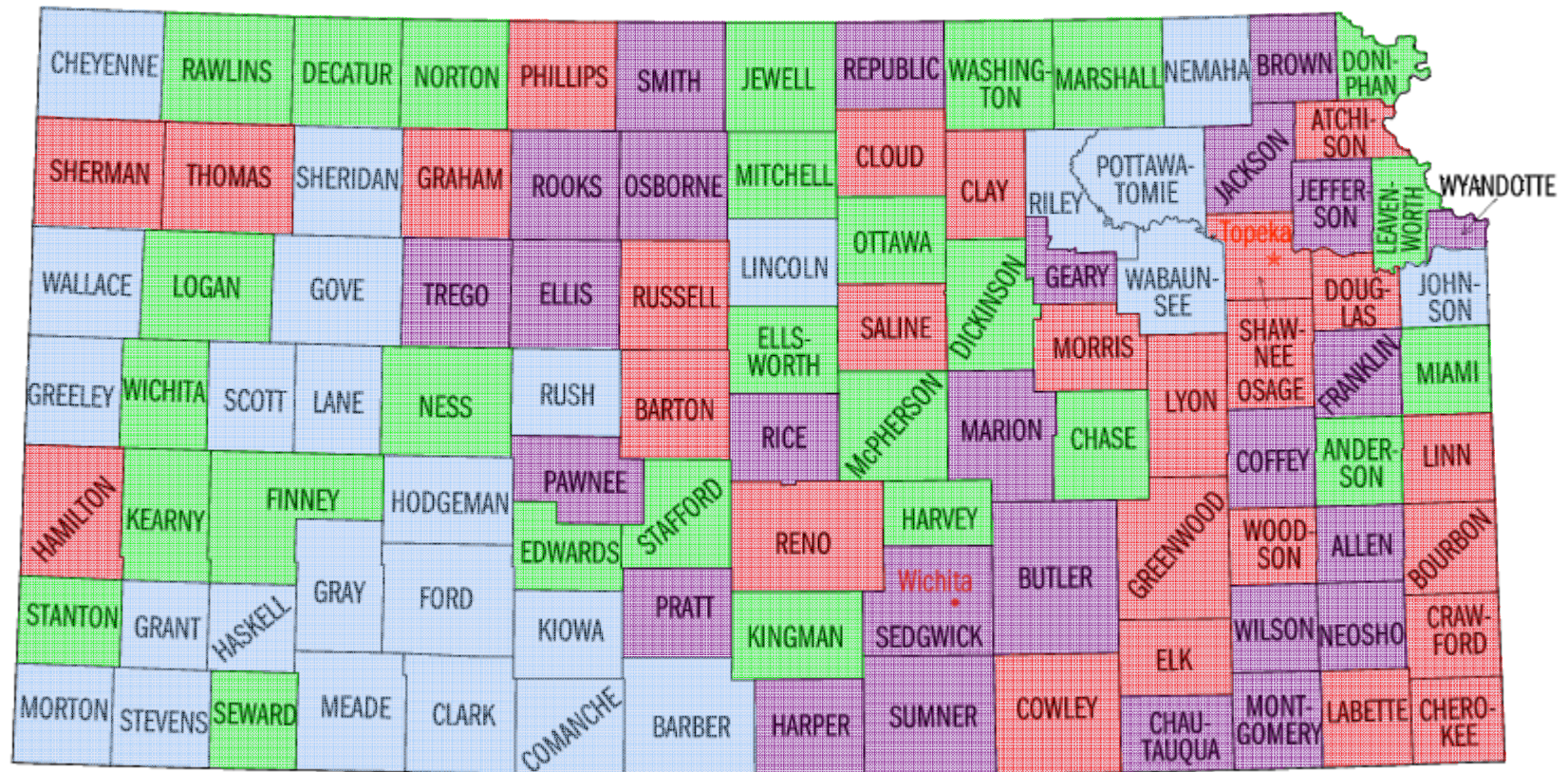
Public Programs include police, fire, paramedic, ambulance, and helicopter transport costs. Victim Services and Child Protective Services Agencies costs are also included in this category. It excludes mental health services costs.

Property Damage and Loss is the value of property damage and of property taken and not recovered.

Quality of Life places a dollar value on pain, suffering and lost quality of life to the victim and their family. The value is computed from jury awards for pain, suffering, and lost quality of life due to physical injuries and fear. For murders, this value is computed from the amount people routinely spend (in dollars or time) to reduce their risk of death.

Make the Perpetrator Pay!

Kansas Counties: Reported Child Abuse and Neglect cases per 1,000 children in 2003



KANSAS 2003 REPORTED CHILD ABUSE/NEGLECT CASES PER 1,000 CHILDREN UNDER 18

Kansas	state	59.8	(Average per 1000 children)					
Allen	county	74.2	Kingman	county	42.7	Sherman	county	102.6
Anderson	county	52.3	Jewell	county	46.2	Smith	county	67.4
Atchison	county	75.9	Johnson	county	26.5	Stafford	county	50.2
Barber	county	19.6	Kiowa	county	38.8	Stanton	county	43.2
Barton	county	84	Labette	county	113.3	Stevens	county	30.5
Bourbon	county	76.1	Lane	county	27.5	Sumner	county	59.8
Brown	county	73.8	Leavenworth	county	51.6	Thomas	county	80.2
Butler	county	64	Lincoln	county	37.5	Trego	county	69.1
Chase	county	54.7	Linn	county	76.1	Wabaunsee	county	31.1
Chautauqua	county	59.1	Logan	county	47.8	Wallace	county	33.6
Cherokee	county	91.8	Lyon	county	112.2	Washington	county	40
Cheyenne	county	38.8	Marion	county	71.9	Wichita	county	51.4
Clark	county	16.1	Marshall	county	50.9	Wilson	county	61
Clay	county	101.2	McPherson	county	48.9	Woodson	county	84.3
Cloud	county	84.6	Meade	county	15	Wyandotte	county	70.7
Coffey	county	70	Miami	county	46.7			
Comanche	county	23.9	Mitchell	county	45.4			
Cowley	county	101.4	Montgomery	county	74.1			
Crawford	county	77.5	Morris	county	105.5			
Decatur	county	41	Morton	county	29			
Dickinson	county	53	Nemaha	county	39.2			
Doniphan	county	55.6	Neosho	county	67.6			
Douglas	county	83.1	Ness	county	44.1			
Edwards	county	45.3	Norton	county	56.4			
Elk	county	103.3	Osage	county	104.1			
Ellis	county	72.7	Osborne	county	69.9			
Ellsworth	county	55.4	Ottawa	county	50.9			
Finney	county	53.4	Pawnee	county	74.5			
Ford	county	39.7	Phillips	county	79.6			
Franklin	county	72.7	Pottawatomie	county	38.3			
Geary	county	73.1	Pratt	county	70			
Gove	county	22.8	Rawlins	county	45.8			
Graham	county	80.3	Reno	county	92.8			
Grant	county	30.2	Republic	county	59.9			
Gray	county	15.4	Rice	county	65.3			
Greeley	county	34.9	Riley	county	38.9			
Greenwood	county	121.7	Rooks	county	74.5			
Hamilton	county	81.9	Rush	county	35.1			
Harper	county	66.7	Russell	county	84.4			
Harvey	county	52.9	Saline	county	88.8			
Haskell	county	18.2	Scott	county	39.7			
Hodgeman	county	22.7	Sedgwick	county	60.8			
Jackson	county	60.4	Seward	county	44.4			
Jefferson	county	61	Shawnee	county	86.5			
Kearny	county	40	Sheridan	county	26.5			

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our website at:*
www.area-ks.net

Data Source: Kansas Department Social Rehabilitation Services; U.S. Census Bureau