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Audit of Ks Foster Care System Blocked

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) - Republican legislators have blocked a state audit of the Kansas foster care system even though several of them acknowledged they have concerns about how it operates.

A legislative committee that directs the work of state auditors voted 5-4 Wednesday against initiating a review of the foster care system sought by two Democrats. The no votes came from Republicans who noted that other reviews of the system already are planned.

Democratic Representatives Ed Trimmer of Winfield and Jim Ward of Wichita wanted auditors to examine whether the Department for Children and Families is adequately protecting foster children and whether its contractors can provide adequate services.

Ward cited the death of several foster care children in recent years—including the 2013 beating death of 4-year-old Hiawatha boy, Mekhi Boone. His father, Lee Davis the Fourth, was convicted in his death and sentenced to more than 20 years in prison. The boy had been removed from his mother the year before and placed with his father.

Republicans on the committee said the department has started its own review of foster care policies and legislative leaders have appointed a special committee to review foster care issues.

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