



Adrian Arnold Building

37 N. Maysville Street
Mount Sterling, KY 40353
Phone: (859) 498-9892
Fax: (859) 498-0316

**Statement by Kaye Jones Templin, CEO
Gateway Children's Services**

Steve Hughes,
Chairman

Cay Lane, Vice
Chairman

Adrian Arnold

Charlie Baker

Nancy Ishmael

Don Kerr

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HB 123 offers an opportunity for Kentucky to demonstrate a commitment to improving the treatment of Status Offenders. This bill offers real hope for appropriate assessments and services. Our agency, Gateway Children's Services, a national model has been providing true alternatives to detention for over 30 years. We have seen thousands of Status Offenders and non-violent public offenders as well, benefit by placement in a safe non-secure environment where their needs were assessed and recommendations made while their education continued. We have long maintained that status offenses are symptoms of larger problems and should be treated as such. This represents a cost effective approach which will lessen the need for secure detention in the short run as well as help prevent future problems for children, families and community. We appreciate the opportunity to support HB 123 and encourage its passage.

