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Opponent Testimony
**HB 2304 - AN ACT concerning education; relating to firearms; standardizing
firearm safety education training programs in school districts.**
Presented to the House Committee on Federal and State Affairs
Tuesday, February 21, 2023
by
Ann Mah and Dr. Deena Horst, Legislative Liaisons
Kansas State Board of Education

Chairman Carpenter and Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify on HB 2304. This bill requires the Kansas State Board of Education (KSBOE) to establish curriculum guidelines for a standardized firearm safety education program for grades K through 12 in Kansas. The KSBOE opposes this bill.

We are pleased to see that the importance of local control is recognized in the first sentence of the bill when it states, “the board of education of a school district **may** provide firearm safety education programs.” The fact is school districts may already do that, and some already do. Districts can even offer the training as an elective course if they choose. They do not need legislative permission to do so; and they can choose the curriculum they want.

While the KSBOE understands the importance of firearm safety training, it rejects the notion that the Kansas Legislature has authority to set curricular standards in Kansas public schools. Per the Kansas State Constitution and Kansas Supreme Court case law, the Kansas State Board of Education has the power and authority to set curricular standards. We are aware of no one from the Legislature that has contacted the KSBOE to discuss this bill or firearm safety curriculum.

It is the purview of local boards of education to determine the curriculum to be used to meet KSBOE standards. KSBOE supports local control on this issue because what is needed for elective firearm safety training across the state does not have a “one-size-fits-all” answer. We are not aware of any requests from local school districts for standards on firearm safety training from either the KSBOE or the Legislature. Further, it may very well be that there are any number of firearm safety training programs besides those mandated in the bill that will meet a school district’s needs.

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Just as textbook companies provide information to school districts in other curricular areas, the program providers listed in the bill have the same opportunity. The decision is then up to locally elected board members if they choose to implement those programs. Since locally elected board members are already able to implement elective firearm safety education programs, there is no need for involvement by the KSBOE, nor is legislation needed.

The KSBOE is open to discussion with legislators on any of their concerns in regard to firearm safety in schools but asks the Committee to reject HB 2304.