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Testimony of Jamie Downs to the
Senate Committee on Health and Public Welfare
Proponent for HB2754
March 19, 2024

Dear Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this written proponent testimony on this bill.

This bill would amend K.S.A. 19-101a to authorize counties to use home rule powers to exempt from conducting school sanitary inspections. Those inspections are defined in K.S.A. 65-202 and require the county's local health officer to make a sanitary inspection of each school building and grounds upon the opening of each fall term of school and to make such additional inspections as are necessary.

This bill would restore the ability of Boards of County Commissioners to work with stakeholders in their community to determine whether such inspections are done by the local health officer or by others. A long-standing local decision-making authority that was unnecessarily changed in the 2020 special session.

School inspections are an unfunded mandate. Butler County Health Department had to hire a staff person to conduct these inspections at a cost of \$31,000 per year. Statute does not indicate what constitutes a sanitary inspection; therefore, each local health office has discretion to determine what specific sanitary issues the school inspector should look for during this inspection. Lastly, if an issue is cited, the health officer has no legal standing to enforce corrections.

I ask the Committee to support this bill.

Respectfully,

Jamie Downs
Administrator
Butler County Health Department

Jamie Downs, Administrator