KANSAS ADVOCATES for BETTER CARE
better elder care, no matter where

January 28, 2026

Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of **HB 2536**, which would require proposed guardians for certain adults with cognitive impairments or neurological conditions to complete training approved by the Secretary for Aging and Disability Services prior to appointment.

Kansas Advocates for Better Care (KABC) is dedicated to improving the quality of long-term care for older Kansans, whether they are aging at home or living in residential care settings. Central to our mission is ensuring that older adults, particularly those living with cognitive impairment, are protected, respected, and supported by systems designed to serve them.

HB 2536 is an important step toward strengthening guardianship protections for some of our most vulnerable Kansans.

The Kansas Guardianship Program (KGP) plays a critical role in our state by providing court-appointed guardians or conservators when needed. When an adult is deemed by the court to be "impaired by age, illness, or disability"—a category that includes individuals living with dementia—the KGP may arrange for a volunteer guardian to be appointed. Once appointed, that guardian is legally responsible for decisions impacting the ward's health, safety, and overall well-being.

Despite the complexity and seriousness of this role, **dementia-specific training is not currently required or provided** through the KGP. This gap creates real risks for individuals living with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, whose needs, behaviors, and communication styles can differ significantly from those of the general population. HB 2536 addresses this gap in a thoughtful and practical way.

Under this bill, **the Alzheimer's Association would provide the required dementia training at no cost**, eliminating financial barriers while ensuring guardians receive high-quality, evidence-based education. This training would equip guardians with essential tools, including:

- Understanding complex and dementia-related behaviors
- Communicating effectively and compassionately with individuals living with cognitive impairment
- Recognizing warning signs of abuse, neglect, or exploitation

For KABC, this bill aligns squarely with our commitment to quality care and resident protection. Properly trained guardians are better positioned to advocate for appropriate services, recognize when care is inadequate, and ensure that the rights and dignity of older adults are upheld, whether they reside in a nursing facility, assisted living setting, or their own home.

Ultimately, **HB 2536 strengthens the guardianship system while improving outcomes for older Kansans living with cognitive impairment**. It promotes informed decision-making, reduces the risk of harm, and reinforces accountability for those entrusted with immense responsibility.

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Kansas Advocates for Better Care urges your support of HB 2536 and thanks the committee for its continued attention to protecting older adults and individuals with disabilities across our state.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony

Sincerely,

Libby Hastings

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