House Committee on Judiciary

Feb 11th, 2026

Proponent of HB2609

Chairwoman Humphries and Members of the Committee:

My name is Dr. Laura Gaffney and I am a primary care physician at Advent Health in Shawnee Mission. I specialize in treating adults with disabilities and am one of the only primary care physicians in Kansas who focuses solely on this population. I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony in support of HB2609, a bill that would give my patients and people with disabilities across Kansas the opportunity to *voluntarily choose one or more trusted people* to help them make decisions in the healthcare setting and in their daily life.

As a primary care provider, I support HB 2609 because it gives my patients with intellectual and developmental disabilities greater independence while still allowing them to receive the support they need to make informed decisions. Many of my patients do not need someone to make decisions for them; they need help understanding options, asking questions, and communicating their preferences in medical settings that can be complex and overwhelming. Supported decision-making reflects how healthcare already works in practice and provides clear guidance on consent and information sharing, which benefits both patients and providers. By offering a less restrictive alternative to guardianship, this bill respects patient dignity, promotes self-determination, and leads to better engagement and health outcomes, while keeping important safeguards in place.

The bill includes clear safeguards that protect both patients and providers by requiring supported decision-making agreements to be voluntary and clearly defined. Supporters are held to a legal duty to act in good faith, which helps prevent misuse or undue influence. For me as a provider, this agreement offers clear guidance around consent and information sharing, reducing confusion and risk while supporting patient autonomy.

I respectfully request the committee's support of HB 2609, which aligns Kansas law with existing healthcare practices and gives providers clear guidance to deliver patient-centered care while reducing confusion and risk.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Laura Gaffney, MD
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