



900 S.W. Jackson Street, Suite 600
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1212
(785) 296-3203
www.ksde.org

Danny Zeck
District 1

Melanie Haas
District 2

Michelle Dombrosky
District 3

Ann E. Mah
District 4

Cathy Hopkins
District 5

Dr. Deena Horst
District 6

Dennis Hershberger
District 7

Betty J. Arnold
District 8

Jim Porter
District 9

Jim McNiece
District 10

Opponent Testimony – WRITTEN ONLY

HB 2236 -AN ACT concerning education; relating to school districts; establishing parents' right to direct the education and upbringing of their children including the right to object to harmful or inappropriate educational materials and activities.

Presented to the House Committee on Education

Wednesday, February 8, 2023

by

Ann Mah and Dr. Deena Horst, Legislative Liaisons

Kansas State Board of Education

Chairman Thomas, Vice - Chairwoman Estes, Ranking Minority Member Stogsdill and members of the House Committee on Education:

The Kansas State Board of Education strongly encourages parental involvement in their child's education. Studies show that parent engagement equals a better educational outcome for the student. Parents are integral in their child's education starting in early childhood through adulthood.

While we agree that parents should make education decisions that are best for their own children, this bill fails to consider how a parent's objection to "any educational materials or activities on the basis that such material or activity harms the student or impairs the parent's sincerely held beliefs, values or principles" and subsequent withdrawal from "the class or educational program in which the material or activity is being provided" is to be handled.

This bill allows a parent to object to materials or activities they determine to be harmful. What is the definition of harmful? Without a definition, parents could make a claim of harm that a reasonable person would find unlikely. Is fact-finding required to determine whether the material is harmful? What is meant by the impairment of a parent's sincerely held belief, values, or principles? Is fact-finding allowed or is the parent's word the only measure?

For example, if a parent objects to their child learning math, for whatever reason, and are therefore unable to meet the state mathematics requirement for graduation, are schools mandated to waive that requirement for that one child?

Kansas leads the world in the success of each student.

These ideas have the potential to create a chaotic management situation for a teacher who is following the curriculum approved by the local board of education. At some point, local boards of education will lose their authority to determine curriculum for their own schools.

Thank you for allowing us to share our thoughts and concerns regarding HB 2236. We believe districts already allow parents to ask for change and it is most often granted unless the request is unable to be met by the school and the district. For the reasons previously indicated, we believe this bill is unnecessary and has the potential of causing the unneeded development of adversarial relationships and distrust within communities; therefore, we ask that you oppose the passage of this bill.