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Written Proponent Testimony for HB 2629

**Presented to the House Education Committee
By Assistant Attorney General Chris Teters**

February 8, 2024

Chair Thomas and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony regarding the Kansas Fights Addiction Act and the Kansas Fights Addiction Grant Review Board grant making procedures.

Following successful settlement negotiations with various corporate entities responsible for the ongoing opioids crisis in Kansas, the Kansas Legislature adopted the Kansas Fights Addiction Act (“KFAA”) to govern the distribution and use of settlement recoveries and to ensure Kansas complies with the various requirements of the nearly one dozen settlements and bankruptcy plans resulting in opioids recoveries.

The KFAA established the Kansas Fights Addiction Fund to receive the bulk of the opioids recoveries and established the Kansas Fights Addiction Grant Review Board (“KFAB”) to govern the distribution and use of the Kansas Fights Addiction Fund. The Act furthermore directs the Attorney General’s office to support the board, including assurance of grant compliance; however, the Attorney General does not have direct control or oversight over the Board’s activity.

As you will see in the 2023 annual report, outside of a handful of grants for administration of the opioids settlement process, the KFAB established a competitive grant making process to ensure the Board complies with all of the requirements of the KFAA and the various opioids settlements. In 2023, this grant making process resulted in over \$10 million in grants to a wide selection of grantees including treatment facilities, recovery homes, prevention services, intervention programs, and more.

Due to the limited nature of the funds, and the broad and evolving nature of the opioids crisis, the KFAB has taken a responsive grant making approach, rather than establishing an annual, general grant making process. To this end, the Board initially awarded grant funding to develop a needs assessment and strategic plan for future years of funding. Recognizing the planning process will take well over a year, the Board developed an interim funding strategy to fund immediate needs

or innovative solutions and tailored the requests for proposals to focus on treatment and prevention strategies identified by the Kansas Prescription Drug and Opioid Advisory Committee.

The Board stated their view that these grants are meant to address short-term needs. As such, the default position for each grant was a single-year of funding. If a grantee requires additional funding, they will need to seek and receive a grant through a future process or request for proposals from the Board.

Looking forward to 2024, the KFAB has not yet established funding goals, though we anticipate the board to do so soon as the needs of those doing the good work helping people with opioid and substance use disorder and correcting the conditions that lead to addiction are ever growing. Nevertheless, the funds available to the board are scarce and any funding from the Board for any single grantee is contingent on the grantee winning an award through a competitive process that is within the area of focus of the request for proposals. The unfortunate reality is there are many more qualified applicants with significant needs than dollars available. This exact reason is why the Legislature charged the Board with maximizing the impact of this limited resource.

Any member who wishes to learn more about how the Kansas Fights Addiction Act is impacting the efforts to reverse the opioids crisis is encouraged to contact the Kansas Fights Addiction Board and to review the Annual Report coming March 1.

Thank you for your consideration.

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