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March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2024

Senate Committee on Education  
Attn: Senator Molly Baumgardner, Chairwoman  
Cc: Cyndie Rexer, Committee Assistant  
State Capitol, Room 445-S  
300 SW 10th Ave  
Topeka, KS 66612

Dear Chairwoman Baumgardner and Members of the Committee,

House Bill (HB) No. 2613 addresses the expansion associated with the drug abuse resistance education (D.A.R.E.) program. The D.A.R.E. program has a proven track record of providing sound drug awareness education to our states' elementary and secondary students. As a Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center (KLETC)-certified instructor with nearly forty (40) years of law enforcement experience, I strongly recommend the continued support of the D.A.R.E. program. The importance of battling an all-hands-on-deck crisis like what we see with fentanyl is of the utmost importance. Educating our youth from a young age helps provide them with the knowledge and tools to possibly save themselves or someone else.

Something as simple as calling "911" started as a program that was implemented and grew to what we have in place today. Children are taught to call "911" when they observe certain situations, and lives have been saved because of this education. Expanding our state's D.A.R.E. program to establish a statewide educator will allow for similar tools to be put in place to help save lives when it comes to awareness and how to handle an emergency. Having a trained educator that can expand this important knowledge to children across the state in a formatted and productive educational course will have immeasurable benefits for our state.

The current fentanyl crisis has caused a dramatic upswing in the number of deaths since 2020 in our state. The number of deaths directly related to opioids, including fentanyl, has continued to grow in the state of Kansas. The age groups affected by this crisis are not just adults. Our youth should have the opportunity to expand their education to include the dangers of drug use and how fentanyl is being used more frequently to create lethal substances.

A statewide D.A.R.E. educator will help our youth protect themselves and others. The education offered to our students can include critical components, such as how to operate the Naloxone HCI nasal spray, to save a life. This education can reinforce that emergency services need to be contacted in a drug overdose situation. We can help students understand and feel safe enough to call law enforcement for help.

This, in itself, does not solve the fentanyl crisis we are battling. But the education of our youth is an immeasurable tool that can be continued and expanded by supporting this bill. I urge you to support the expansion of this bill.

Respectfully,

Terry L. Haak  
Special Agent  
Tobacco Enforcement, Civil Division