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January 31, 2025

The Honorable Susan Estes  
Chair, House Committee on Education  
Kansas House of Representatives  
300 SW 10th Ave  
Topeka, KS 66612

Dear Chairman Estes,

My name is Jory Ratzlaff, and I am honored to serve as the current Kansas FFA State President. I am writing to offer support for HB 2103, which recognizes and values the educational experiences students gain outside of traditional school-sponsored events—particularly those that enhance agricultural knowledge and skills.

Agriculture is the backbone of Kansas, and the future of this industry depends on students, like myself, who are passionate about learning and growing as leaders in this field. While school-sponsored programs such as FFA and agricultural education classes provide a strong foundation, many transformative learning experiences take place outside of the school setting. Internships, hands-on experiences with industry professionals, leadership conferences, and competitive agricultural events hosted by organizations beyond local school districts allow students to apply their knowledge in real-world situations. These opportunities help develop critical skills such as responsibility, problem-solving, and innovation—qualities that are essential for success in agriculture and beyond.

Currently, FFA members enjoy excused absences when participating in these activities, because FFA is an intracurricular component of an agricultural education program. However, students who attend schools without an agricultural education program, or those involved in other agricultural organizations such as 4-H, do not have the same opportunity. These students also gain invaluable knowledge and experience through their participation in agricultural events, yet they often face barriers in receiving the same level of academic flexibility. HB 2103 addresses this inequity by ensuring that all students, regardless of school offerings, have the opportunity to engage in agricultural learning experiences without unnecessary restrictions.

For example, many FFA and 4-H members participate in supervised agricultural experiences (SAEs), livestock shows, agronomy competitions, and industry conferences, all of which provide hands-on learning that cannot always be replicated in a classroom.

These experiences equip students with practical skills, connect them with industry professionals, and broaden their career aspirations.

HB 2103 acknowledges the importance of these opportunities and ensures that students have the flexibility to engage in meaningful agricultural experiences. By supporting this bill, you are investing in the next generation of agricultural leaders and strengthening the future of Kansas agriculture.

I encourage you and your colleagues to support HB 2103 to benefit students across our state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jory Ratzlaff", with a long horizontal line extending from the end of the signature.

**Jory Ratzlaff**  
Kansas FFA State President