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HB2034– Authorizing school districts to employ or accept such persons as volunteers.
Opponent – Written only

Wednesday, January 14, 2026, 1:30 PM

House Committee on Education
Rep. Susan Estes, Chair

Chair Estes and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on HB2034.

My name is Jay Simmons and I am a resident of Overland Park, Kansas. Please accept this statement opposing HB2034. This proposal, if enacted, will violate Kansans' First Amendment right to religious freedom due to its disregard for the constitutionally-mandated separation of church and state. HB2034 would authorize school districts to use public funds to employ chaplains or to accept volunteer chaplains to provide services to students. The proposal further violates the First Amendment by endorsing the presence of faith-based staff and volunteers in our public schools. Moreover, HB2034 uses public schools to favor one religion over others.

Schools already hire appropriately trained and credentialed counselors and social workers to provide support to students. These counselors and social workers pursue their work without reference to religious affiliation. In short, chaplains without appropriate counseling credentials are unnecessary in public schools. Schools may already utilize community volunteers, including chaplains, for school projects and programs, a fact that makes HB2034 unnecessary.

In conclusion, HB2034 serves no purpose and adds no benefit to our public schools. Its only objective appears to be the utilization of public tax dollars for the employment of faith-based individuals in our schools. For these reasons, I urge you to reject HB2034 and to support Kansans' religious freedom in accord with the First Amendment. Thank you for your attention to this matter and for considering my statement.