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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 Shannon Ryan. I am a Kansas Resident, and I grew up in the Shawnee Mission School District. I value the quality education I received in public school, and I remember how critical our school counselors were to us as students. Having a neutral person at school that created a safe environment to discuss complicated feelings and experiences was something that I deeply appreciated, even as a child.

As an adult now, with children of my own, some of which I adopted, I have personally experienced the importance of having a trained and certified professional at school to support my children's needs. Chaplains are not required to have professional therapy training, education or certifications, which would be irresponsible to subject vulnerable children to, who have been through trauma or are experiencing social challenges. It is vital to make sure that people providing therapy services and guidance, especially to children, are qualified and are not allowed to commit unwanted indoctrination toward our children. It is the parent's rights to choose what religions our children are exposed to, and the State of Kansas shall not infringe on that right.

Lastly, at a fundamental level, this bill violates the First Amendment and Establishment Clause by favoring certain religious beliefs over others. If this bill were allowing Islamic Imam's to counsel our children in public schools, would the bill even be considered by this legislature? If one type of religious leader is allowed to indoctrinate our children without parental supervision or approval, all regions would have to be allowed the same access to our children. Would a Christian family want their children counseled by a Satanist? This bill opens the door to all kinds of religious indoctrination from any religion or else it is breaking Federal Law by committing religious discrimination. If a parent wants their own religion to influence the counseling of their children, they can send their children to private religious school because that is a private family decision, or they can receive religious counseling from their place of worship. Public schools are a wholly inappropriate place to allow for religious indoctrination. Please re-read the Constitution

of the United States, to remind yourself of the boundaries which make our country a place that has freedom of religion and freedom from religion.

I oppose HB 2034 that would allow Chaplains in Public Schools because they are not qualified therapists or counselors, the bill overrides a parent's right to choose what religion our children are exposed to, religious indoctrination does not belong in schools, and the bill is unconstitutional because it favors a certain religious belief over all others unless it also allows Islamic, Satanist and all other religious leaders to act as school counselors as well. Thank you for reading and considering my testimony to prevent any kind of indoctrination in Public Schools.