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HB 2203 – Adding Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) to the Conditions That May Establish

Eligibility for Special Education

Proponent – Written Testimony for Hearing on January 15, 2026

Honorable Members of the House Committee on Education:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB 2203. I am a Kansas constituent and the mother of a child with Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD), a permanent, brain-based disability caused by prenatal exposure to alcohol.

My daughter's struggles in school were often misunderstood. Her access to special education services was denied until she was evaluated at a full-time service outside of the state of Kansas. FASD impacted her executive functioning, emotional regulation, memory, and ability to apply what she learned—making it impossible for her to perform at the same level as her peers academically or socially.

Over time, school became less and less beneficial to her daily life skills. What she was being asked to learn had little to no application in her life. The state-required curriculum, for example reading *To Kill a Mockingbird*, was a futile exercise without any concrete application. If a student cannot read and apply simple directions on a boxed brownie mix, reading a complex novel has little merit. Taking coursework such as human biology when basic math skills have not been mastered is a poor use of valuable instructional time.

HB 2203 is an important and necessary step toward preventing stories like my daughter's from being repeated. By explicitly including FASD under Other Health Impairment, this bill helps ensure that eligibility decisions are based on functional need—not appearances or test scores alone. Earlier recognition and access to appropriate services could mean the difference between a child remaining engaged in school or giving up altogether.

This bill also sends a critical signal that educators need training and awareness regarding FASD. These children are not willfully disobedient or unmotivated—they are neurologically different. When schools understand this, outcomes improve not only for students, but also for families, educators, and classrooms as a whole.

Thank you for your time, your service, and your willingness to consider legislation that gives vulnerable children a fair chance to succeed. I respectfully urge you to support HB 2203.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Ramshaw