

Oral Testimony before the
House Education Committee

On
HB 2420

Requiring school districts to obtain parental consent prior to providing certain school based
mental health services to a student.

by
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Chair Estes and members of the House Education committee. Thank you for the opportunity to present opposition testimony on HB 2420. USA Kansas supports parent/guardian involvement in decisions regarding their child's wellbeing. However, USA Kansas appears in opposition to HB 2420 for the following reasons.

1. HB 2420 would require written parental consent before school staff can provide Tier 2 or Tier 3 supports. In reality this can delay identification of addressing emotional and behavioral concerns. Many students show distress in school settings that can be dealt with at the moment. Requiring written consent before addressing the concerns would delaying supports students need.
2. Not all parents are not reachable or supportive. Too often students experience trauma, neglect, or unstable home environment. When schools are prevented from acting those students could suffer academically and emotionally.
3. The language in HB 2420 is very broad and would capture a wide range of interventions that educators and counselors provide. (Small-group skill building or simple check in supports) HB 2420's language is overly broad and could lead to unnecessary administrative burdens and confusion by staff.
4. Requiring written consent for nearly all targeted or individual support creates a significant burden onto the school staff. Teachers, counselors, and administrators could become reluctant to support children for fear of penalties.
5. HB 2420's rigid consent requirement could be interpreted too broadly and undermine current guidelines that are already in place. The bill would create procedural barriers and unintended harm to students who need timely support. We need to look at policies that provide meaningful parental involvement with flexible, evidence-based mental health support for all students.

For these reasons respectfully I urge the committee to reject HB 2420.