

Testimony in opposition of HB 2420

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HB 2420 Requiring school districts to obtain parental consent prior to providing certain school-based mental health services to a student.

Opponent providing in person testimony on January 22, 2026, at 1:30 pm.

Chairwoman Estes and committee members thank you for the opportunity to testify today.

My name is Tonya Ricklefs, and I am the President of the Kansas Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers. I am here today in opposition to HS 2420, which would require parental or guardian consent before mental health services can be provided in schools.

I come from a family of educators and social workers, and I deeply respect the role schools play in supporting Kansas children. In an ideal situation, parents or guardians are actively involved in addressing a child's mental health needs, and mental health providers fully support that collaboration.

However, HB 2420 does not adequately account for real-world circumstances. While it includes provisions for imminent self-harm, it fails to recognize the many urgent mental health situations that fall outside that narrow definition but still require timely intervention. Schools cannot always reach parents immediately, and delays can prevent children from receiving necessary support.

Additionally, not all students have safe or supportive home environments. In my work as a social worker and mediator, I have seen situations—such as high-conflict family dynamics—where involving a parent immediately may not be in the child's best interest. For many students, school is their safest and most stable environment, and trusted adults there may be the only ones a child feels comfortable turning to for help.

Kansas schools have long served as a cornerstone of our communities. This bill would create an additional barrier for students seeking mental health support and could discourage them from asking for help when they need it most.

For these reasons, I urge you to oppose HS 2420. Thank you for your time and consideration. Our organization is open to future discussions on the intent of this bill and I am happy to answer any questions.