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House Bill 2420 - Written-Only Testimony in Opposition

Date of Committee Hearing: January 22, 2026

Dear Chairperson Estes and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in **opposition to House Bill 2420**.

As a public school teacher and advocate for student well-being, as well as a parent of elementary students in Kansas Public School, I believe HB 2420—while framed around parental rights—actually creates a dangerous environment for Kansas students. This bill is redundant to existing law, creates unnecessary administrative barriers to care, and threatens the livelihoods of dedicated school professionals through punitive fines.

1. HB 2420 is Redundant to Existing Kansas Law

Kansas already has clear, established protections for parental rights regarding health services. **K.S.A. 72-6287** currently requires parental consent for "ongoing behavioral health treatment." This statute already ensures that parents are the primary decision-makers for their child's long-term mental health care. HB 2420 adds a layer of confusing bureaucracy over a system that is already functioning and governed by state law.

2. Barriers to Immediate and Essential Care

The language of HB 2420 requires *both* direct verbal and written communication before *any* mental health service can be initiated. In a school setting, "mental health services" can range from a student in a minor emotional crisis to a child needing immediate support after a traumatic event.

- **Unnecessary Delays:** Requiring a school nurse or counselor to pause and wait for a verbal confirmation and a returned written document before offering support could mean a student in distress is left without help during a critical window.
- **Ambiguity:** The bill lacks clarity on what constitutes "initiating a service." Does a check-in from a school counselor after a student is seen crying in the hall count? This ambiguity will lead to hesitation by staff when students need them most.

3. The "Chilling Effect" of Civil Penalties

Perhaps the most concerning aspect of HB 2420 is the **\$5,000 fine** imposed on individual school employees for violations.

- **Fear-Based Environment:** When a school social worker or nurse faces a life-altering financial penalty for a subjective "violation" of this act, they will understandably be hesitant to act.
- **Erosion of Trust:** Successful student outcomes depend on a partnership between parents and school staff. By weaponizing the law with heavy fines, this bill creates an adversarial relationship that discourages the very collaboration it claims to promote.

4. Alignment with Educational Experts

Advocacy groups that work daily with our students—including the **Kansas School Nurses Association**, **Kansas PTA**, and the **Kansas Association of School Boards**—have raised alarms about the unintended consequences of this bill. These professionals understand that when a student's mental health is supported, they are better prepared to learn. HB 2420 undermines that readiness.

Conclusion We all agree that parents must be involved in their children's education and healthcare. However, HB 2420 does not improve parental involvement; it only creates legal traps for educators and barriers for children. We should trust our local school districts to follow the existing consent laws (K.S.A. 72-6287) that allow for both parental oversight and immediate student safety.

I respectfully ask the Committee to **not recommend HB 2420 for passage**.

Respectfully submitted,

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Public School Teacher and Parent