

Chelcie Heitman
1506 SW Medford Ave
Topeka, KS 66604
chelcieheitman@gmail.com

Bill Number: HB 2420- Parental Consent School Based Mental Health

View: Opponent

Testimony: Written only

Date of Hearing: 1/22/26 at 1:30 PM

Dear House Committee on Education,

My name is Chelcie Heitman and I'm a 7-12 school counselor. I've been employed as a school counselor for 14 years. My role is to ensure that students have timely, equitable access to academic, social, emotional, and mental health support so they can learn, grow, and stay safe.

Kansas House Bill 2420 undermines that mission by requiring parental consent before school counselors can provide Tier 2 or Tier 3 mental health support. While framed as a measure to increase parental involvement, this legislation would have serious, harmful consequences for students, especially those most at risk.

What HB 2420 means for Kansas students:

Under this bill...

- Students who ask for help may be told to wait.
- Early intervention is delayed by paperwork and procedural barriers.
- Students who do not feel safe disclosing concerns at home may stop asking for help altogether.
- School mental health support becomes reactive instead of preventative.

In practice, this means a student experiencing anxiety, depression, grief, bullying, or trauma could be denied timely support, not because the need isn't real, but because consent has not yet been obtained.

The students who rely most on school counselors are the very ones who would be most harmed by HB 2420. Students who are already high-risk; those experiencing trauma, family instability, mental health stigma, abuse, neglect, or fear of punishment at home are often the least able to seek or obtain parental consent. For these students, school may be the only safe place to ask for help.

By placing additional barriers in front of support, this bill creates blind spots where student distress can go unseen and unaddressed. When access to help is restricted, problems do not disappear, they escalate. What could have been addressed early through brief, targeted intervention may grow into crisis situations that affect learning, behavior, and safety.

School counselors are ethically bound, professionally trained, and already operate within clear legal and ethical guidelines that prioritize student safety and parental involvement whenever appropriate and safe. **We**

collaborate with families, not work against them. HB 2420 assumes harm where there is none and replaces professional judgment with a one-size-fits-all mandate that ignores the complex realities students face.

HB 2420 sends a dangerous message to children and adolescents: ***Help comes with conditions.*** It tells students that reaching out may result in delay, exposure, or consequences beyond their control. That message discourages help-seeking behavior at the exact moment we should be encouraging it. Protecting students means ensuring timely access to qualified support, trusting trained professionals, and removing barriers to care—not adding new ones.

For the safety, well-being, and future of Kansas students, HB 2420 should be opposed.

Thank you for your time, consideration and service to our state.

Chelcie Heitman