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

Opponent – Written Only

January 22nd, 2026

Chairperson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony. My name is Lisa Last, and I serve as the School, Family & Community Connections Counselor for USD 379, Clay County, a small rural district in north central Kansas. I respectfully oppose the proposed legislation requiring mandatory parental consent for Tier 2 and Tier 3 school-based mental health services.

In my current role, I have seen first-hand the rise in anxiety, depression, and suicidal/self-harm ideation in students in recent years. School is often the first place these concerns are identified and addressed, and school counselors and social workers are often first responders for students in crisis. Requiring parental consent for Tier 2 and Tier 3 school-based mental health services is redundant and unnecessary. School mental health professionals already routinely work with parents, obtaining consent for Tier 2 small groups, touching base about Tier 3 interventions, and in many other situations as outlined in district policy and in the American School Counselor Association (ASCA) Ethical Standards.

Requiring consent before ANY Tier 2 and Tier 3 intervention begins is not practical and will delay response time, putting the wellbeing of students at risk. Counselors are highly trained professionals with an ethical code who need the flexibility to exercise professional judgement in response to students in crisis.

Many rural communities also lack community-based mental health services. In many cases, school is the only place students can receive mental health support due to transportation barriers, lack of insurance, or long waitlists for care.

I worry that requiring consent for Tier 2 and Tier 3 interventions will also disproportionately impact students experiencing abuse or neglect. Research tells us that children who are the victims of abuse or neglect are more likely to share mental health concerns with school personnel than to caregivers. If students know that school mental health professionals must

contact their parent(s), students may be less likely to talk to anyone and may not seek the help they need.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the committee to oppose this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lisa Last". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lisa" and last name "Last" clearly distinguishable.

Lisa Last