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620-204-0911

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

Opponent - Written

January 22, 2026 (scheduled)

My name is Meischa Zimmerman. I am a mother of 5 children, 2 of which are in public school at Sterling High School in Sterling, Kansas; a Freshman and a Junior. Our two oldest are graduates of SHS and one more that is set to start Kindergarten next year. I'm coming to you as a mother and as an advocate for public education and an advocate for mental health. I don't want to be too long-winded and I don't want you to stop reading out of "blah blah" boredom but, I promise you that my testimony is worth reading.

If it weren't for the Interventionist at USD 376, taking the steps needed to do her job - which would have been held up if HB 2420 was introduced and passed at the time - both of my children wouldn't be thriving like they are today. In fact, one probably wouldn't be on this earth with us.

As I mentioned before, I have two kids who attend public school in Sterling, and although we are a small 321A school, our district is full of KSHSAA award-winning teams (basketball and football), athletes (321A girls tennis champion, Chelsie Brown - who went on to Tokyo to compete and medal in the Deafolympics. As well a double's team that medaled in 9th place at State Tennis - half of that team lives at our house). Not to mention our Speech and Debate Team that just won the State Championship last week. We have some amazing students and amazing educators in our district but every single person has something they're dealing with that no one else may know about and that's one reason why there are mental health services offered at our school.

My husband and I chose to homeschool when the 2020-21 school year began because we had a new baby at home, and since we were given the choice, we took that opportunity to do what we felt was best for our family. After our children re-entered school the following year, my daughter saw a sign with small slips of paper next to it on the new "counselor's" door that read: "If you need to talk, write your name on a slip of paper and place it in the envelope." She wrote her name on there, and that one move changed our lives. She was called in and just started talking, and she felt as though it was the safest place to say what she needed to say and get those things off her chest. It turns out that while she was staying with her biological dad during his visitation time, she and her little brother were being mentally and physically abused. My ex knew how to abuse so as to not leave marks and "don't tell mom" was said to those two kids far too many times. My daughter felt comfortable telling the mental health professional what was going on since she wasn't "telling mom". That helped to get her away from him and it helped get her started with a therapist to assist her in healing what needed healed so that she could grow and thrive.

A year and a half passed and my son felt comfortable enough to go to the same individual within the district to tell her that he was being abused in a far worse way at the hands of a friend of his biological dad. Where the family courts failed us by forcing him to continue visits where he was being physically abused, our interventionist did not. Thankfully, my son also felt as though it was safe, he wasn't "telling mom" and okay to tell her instead of me and as it sits now, my son is now healing in a different way through services that started by seeing and having a conversation with the district mental health professional.

When it comes to a child's mental health and well-being, there are things that parents need notified of immediately and I respect the district's policies on when and how we are notified as parents but the part that is most important is that there are policies put in place by the Board of Education and the district, in conjunction with the mental health providers that work with the school, used to notify parents. The purpose of the BOE and administration is to do what's best for each of our students and our students as a whole. HB 2420 is just an example of the Kansas Legislation overstepping and not allowing those who know the job, and have been doing it successfully for quite a long time, to do just that - their job.

In closing, I also feel as though I should mention that there could be dire consequences should there be a delay in critical care to some students due to the threat of - among other things - a fine of \$5,000 if this Bill were to be passed out of committee. This is not a fiscal matter and I don't see this Bill as anything but vague and an example of overreach by not allowing those who have been voted into a specific position - by the members of the communities they serve - to do their job.

Please do not allow this Bill out of committee.

Thank you for your time,  
Meischa Zimmerman