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Written Testimony – Opponent

Senate Committee on Education

Senate Bill 48

February 7, 2025

Chairperson Erickson and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to SB 48.

Kansas NEA is a member-driven organization representing all 40,000 educators in Kansas, with nearly 22,000 members. The positions we advocate for have been proposed, debated, and adopted by several hundred members elected by their peers to attend our annual Representative Assembly.

KNEA opposes any efforts to erode or override the authority and role of the Kansas Department of Education and the Kansas State Board of Education. Accordingly, we strongly believe that the debate surrounding SB 48 should take place within the State Board of Education, not the Kansas Legislature.

If this debate were occurring in its proper venue, KNEA would oppose SB 48 because of its impact on educators, students, and the Kansans who rely on a world-class public education system. Stripping a community's school of its accreditation based on arbitrary statutory language such as "significant reduction" or "significant increase" is punitive in nature and will do nothing to address the challenges educators face in the classroom.

Similarly, language referencing "compliance with applicable federal and state statutes and rules and regulations" is vague and susceptible to misinterpretation—or worse, punitive action. Who defines "applicable"? Who determines "compliance"?

The threat of "reallocation of school district resources" is also tremendously concerning, particularly if it is imposed under the vague statutory language referenced above.

Since the Legislature has chosen to conduct this debate, KNEA opposes SB 48 on the grounds of legislative overreach. Preventing the State Board of Education from "substantially revising or updating" curriculum standards is yet another example of how SB 48 exemplifies this overreach. We urge this body to reassess this troubling trend.

In conclusion, KNEA recognizes that many of these proposals bring forth important issues worthy of thoughtful discussion. We welcome these conversations and remain committed to being a constructive voice in the legislative process. However, enacting legislation such as SB 48 without meaningful input from the education community only deepens division, fosters distrust, and undermines the collaborative efforts needed to create an effective education policy.

We respectfully urge the committee to oppose SB 48.