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Oral Testimony – Neutral

Senate Committee on Education

Senate Bill 263

February 27, 2025

Chairperson Erickson and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify neutrally to SB 263.

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 has several resolutions dealing with the safety of students and educators in public school settings. One such resolution states:

KNEA further believes that safety, discipline, and order are essential for an environment conducive to learning and we believe that every school district should be proactive in providing for the safety and security of all students by taking appropriate security measures.

SB 263 appears to be consistent with our values in that regard.

As always, KNEA is concerned about any legislation that mandates policies and procedures that should be left to local school districts. We appreciate that the author of this bill has considered these concerns, and we look forward to continuing discussions on this topic.

We are pleased that the bill defines and distinguishes between active shooter drills and active shooter simulations. We are also encouraged that the bill explicitly states that younger students should not be subjected to full-scale active shooter simulations and that these simulations should not take place during school hours. Both provisions are critically important.

Our primary concern with SB 263 is the absence of a provision allowing educators to opt out of full-scale active shooter simulations. Some educators may have physical or emotional reasons for opting out, and we believe they should have the right to do so. We respectfully ask the committee to consider an amendment to include such a provision, and we look forward to discussing this matter with the Chair and other committee members before the bill is finalized.

Thank you for your time.