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Proponent Support for SB 275

For the Senate Education Committee,
Kansas Legislature
March 13, 2025

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony in support of Senate Bill 275 on behalf of myself, based on my clinical experience as a family physician who practices obstetrics in Wichita.

I have included prenatal and obstetrical care in my practice since coming to Kansas for residency in 2009 and have delivered hundreds of babies to date. I am privileged to accompany new parents along their journey of pregnancy. I often see their first reaction to seeing their baby on ultrasound, their delight in watching him or her grow in utero before finally meeting their little one face-to-face. They, and myself, are often filled with awe at the experience of seeing the heart beat, watching their baby kick or jiggle with hiccups, and yawn and suck his or her thumb. I once had to nearly catch a father when he first saw his baby on ultrasound, as he staggered back to the wall, awestruck. Other parents begin to cry, others to smile; even young siblings will point to the screen and say "baby." Ultrasound provides this amazing window into the womb and a chance to see and understand our earliest development, a view that was hidden from us for most of human history. It allows not only important screening and diagnostic capabilities, but also supports bonding for parents, improving prenatal and post-delivery outcomes[1], [2]. It is clear that "seeing" brings a much deeper understanding than simply reading a report.

Ultrasound is also an invaluable learning tool. A picture is certainly worth a thousand words, and somewhere around 65% of us are visual learners[3]; other studies suggest 30% are auditory learners. Combining auditory and visual modalities in the form of short videos is an ideal medium for educating teens. Understanding human development is a central part of basic biology. Additionally, part of my practice also includes counseling adolescents on pregnancy and pregnancy avoidance, but this is often limited in a medical setting due to constraints on time. I believe a video of human development in utero will make the possibility of pregnancy much

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[1] Skelton E, Cromb D, Smith A, Harrison G, Rutherford M, Malamateniou C, Ayers S. The influence of antenatal imaging on prenatal bonding in uncomplicated pregnancies: a mixed methods analysis. BMC Pregnancy Childbirth. 2024 Apr 11;24(1):265. doi: 10.1186/s12884-024-06469-0. PMID: 38605314; PMCID: PMC11007968. https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11007968/

[2] Skelton E, Webb R, Malamateniou C, Rutherford M, Ayers S. The impact of antenatal imaging on parent experience and prenatal attachment: a systematic review. J Reprod Infant Psychol. 2022;00:1–23. doi: 10.1080/02646838.2022.2088710.

[3] Jawed S, Amin HU, Malik AS, Faye I. Classification of Visual and Non-visual Learners Using Electroencephalographic Alpha and Gamma Activities. Front Behav Neurosci. 2019 May 7;13:86. doi: 10.3389/fnbeh.2019.00086. PMID: 31133829; PMCID: PMC6513874 https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC6513874/

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more concrete, especially for teens with limited understanding of the connection between risky behavior and pregnancy.

In my opinion, human reproduction and sexuality education should include an evidence-based understanding of human development and embryology, at the level school age children and adolescents can understand, and in a modality conducive to learning. Most young people will become parents during their lifetime, and a realistic and positive approach to family planning is very much needed. Providing a solid and scientifically grounded video about early human development is important to preparing young people to pursue - or delay - the decision of parenthood, and better prepare for their own children. Understanding how conception takes place, how babies grow and develop in utero, can only help our Kansas youth, setting them - and their future children - up for success.

I am sorry to not have been available at the time of the hearing, but happy to take any questions by email and will try to respond quickly.

Respectfully,
Lisa Gilbert, MD, MA (Ethics)

KANSAS Family Voice™

Proponent Testimony for SB 275

Brittany Jones

Senate Education

March 13, 2025

Chairwoman Erickson and members of the committee, my name is Brittany Jones. I am an attorney and the Director of Policy and Engagement for Kansas Family Voice. We believe that students should be exposed to the beauty of life in the womb. S.B 275 is an important asset to classrooms where students can learn these basics about biology in a factual and simple way.

S.B. 275 is a simple way to make sure students have a basic understanding of human biology and it promotes life readiness. This is a simple education bill that allows students a firsthand view of what a baby in utero looks like. This can prepare them for their future as parents, aunts, uncles, and even teachers so that the first time they see an ultrasound is not when their first child is in utero.

This is not a mandate on the classroom, but it ensures that if a school is teaching a class on this subject that they include this important information. This is the sort of factual information that helps students better understand the world around them and what is happening during pregnancy.

Every life is valuable, including the child in the womb. S.B. 275 is a simple way to affirm this truth, promote positive educational outcomes, and prepare students for life. I urge you to support S.B. 275 and report it favorably for passage.

Thank you!

Brittany Jones

Proponent Testimony of SB275
For the Senate Education Committee
Kansas Legislature
March 13, 2025

Tara Sander Lee, Ph.D.
Science Policy Advisor

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony in support of Senate Bill 275, which would require school districts to include a fetal development presentation as part of the curriculum for any course that addresses human growth, human development or human sexuality.

I am providing written testimony on behalf of myself, a trained scientist with over 25 years' postgraduate experience in academics and clinical medicine with an emphasis on human development and the cause of childhood disease. I obtained a Ph.D. in Biochemistry from the Medical College of Wisconsin and fellowship training at Harvard Medical School and Boston Children's Hospital. I was an Associate Professor at the Medical College of Wisconsin, where I directed a lab that investigated heart disease in children and served as Scientific Director of Molecular Diagnostics at Children's Hospital of Wisconsin. I also served as Vice President and Director of Life Sciences at the Charlotte Lozier Institute and was Senior Editor of VoyageOfLife.com, a scientific website that educates on human development from conception to birth. I have also served as a member of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary's Advisory Committee on Infant and Maternal Mortality.

Human life begins at fertilization (sperm-egg fusion) and the dynamics of human development are well-established based on centuries of biological discovery, technological advancement, and validated, objective science. Sadly, most school-aged children do not know basic facts of human development, the science behind their own existence and everyone around them.

For example, most children are not aware of the fascinating fact that the heart is the first organ to form and function in each developing human.[1] About 22 days after fertilization (6th week gestation), the heart starts to beat and pumps blood rhythmically[2] at 110 beats per minute![3] By

[1] Tan C, M, J, Lewandowski A, J: *The Transitional Heart: From Early Embryonic and Fetal Development to Neonatal Life*. Fetal Diagn Ther 2020;47:373-386

[2] Sadler, Thomas W., *Medical Embryology*, 14th edition, 2019. Page 181; and Hill, M.A. (2023, January 28), *Cardiovascular System Development*, Available at: https://embryology.med.unsw.edu.au/embryology/index.php/Cardiovascular_System_Development

[3] Murugan VA, Murphy BO, Dupuis C, Goldstein A, Kim YH. *Role of ultrasound in the evaluation of first-trimester pregnancies in the acute setting.* Ultrasonography. 2020 Apr;39(2):178-189. doi: 10.14366/usg.19043. Epub 2019 Oct 16. PMID: 32036643; PMCID: PMC7065984; *and* Hornberger LK, Sahn DJ. Rhythm abnormalities of the fetus. Heart. 2007 Oct;93(10):1294-300. doi: 10.1136/hrt.2005.069369. PMID: 17890709; PMCID: PMC2000955.

the end of the 6th week, the human heart will have already beat over 1 million times.[4]

The human brain also undergoes complex changes during development. Brain activity has been recorded in a developing human being as early as 45 days during the 9th week gestation,[5] and will continue to mature well into adulthood and is not complete until around 25 years of age! There are so many other fascinating facts and behaviors during pregnancy, such as the ability of the developing child to suck his or her thumb, yawn, cry, hear music, to feel and touch with unique fingerprints.

Education in human developmental biology lacks the scientific rigor students deserve, even though modern medicine and science reveal more about the beginnings (and uniqueness) of each human being from fertilization to birth than ever before.[6] This gap in knowledge creates a void in comprehensive curriculum focusing on human embryology and fetal development.

In summary, I strongly support SB 275. This bill addresses an urgent need for standards-based science education that reflects the truth of our human existence. SB275 is a crucial step toward providing accurate and basic human biology standards across your state, and a formidable opportunity for Kansas to serve as a leader in the nation. I encourage you to vote "yes" on this bill without hesitation.

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[4] *"Prenatal Form and Function – The Making of an Earth Suit," at Appendix A – Calculations (The Beat Goes On – Tracking the Total Number of Heart Beats During Pregnancy and Beyond), The Endowment for Human Development, https://www.ehd.org/dev_article_appendix.php (accessed November 21, 2020).*

[5] Borkowski, Winslow J., and Richard L. Bernstine. "Electroencephalography of the Fetus." *Neurology* 5, no. 5 (May 1, 1955): 362. https://doi.org/10.1212/WNL.5.5.362.

[6] Charlotte Lozier Institute. (n.d.) The Voyage of Life. Retrieved from: https://lozierinstitute.org/voyage/