

## Ziegler Family Dentistry

Pete Ziegler, DDS

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Date: February 9, 2026

To: Senate Committee on Government Efficiency

From: Pete Ziegler, DDS

Topeka District Dental Society Past President

General Dentist; Topeka, KS

RE: Testimony on SB 432

Good morning and thank you for your time and allowing me to say a few words.

My name is Pete Ziegler. I am a general dentist, born and raised and practicing in Topeka, KS with 7 years of experience as a practice owner. I am in opposition to Senate Bill 432 and I would like to explain a couple key points as to why I oppose the bill. If passed, this bill could expose patients to over-treatment and car salesmen-like tactics, and it WILL negatively impact small businesses in Kansas.

For background purposes, this bill is being proposed by DSO organizations. DSO stands for Dental Support Organization. Essentially, these are franchise practices. This means that much of the business side is handled or reviewed by a management team, not necessarily in the same state. This can include: hiring, firing, supplies ordering, labs contracted with, and most importantly, finances. In this model of business, the dentists are oftentimes uninvolved with much of the business and are usually associate dentists, which would be non-owning dentists. This is different from most dental businesses in that usually the owner of the practice is the dentist practicing there (usually 100% of the time). It is true that this model exists in Kansas already, but if Senate Bill 432 is passed we will open the flood gates of the DSO model spreading to Kansas.

My primary concern is for patient welfare. My wife and I are both 3rd generation Topekans. This is our home and our community. We care about its citizens and their wellbeing. They are our family, friends, co-workers, fellow church members, etc. I want what is best for this community whether they choose me as their dentist or not. This reason above all else is why I oppose this bill. As a dentist, I frequently have new patients come to me seeking a second opinion. If you ask almost any dentist in Topeka what they usually hear from a patient who had previously seen a corporate/franchise dental office they will tell you that the patient has a multi-thousand dollar treatment plan that they are concerned about. I then perform the exam and most of the time I diagnose less than \$1000 worth of restorative needs. This is a VERY COMMON occurrence! Literally north of 90% of patients that I have seen who are in for a second opinion have that story. I do not know exactly why that is. I do not know how their business model is structured. What I do know is that this is an established pattern that has been observed by almost every dentist outside of those organizations. In my opinion, many of these

treatment plans are gross over-treatment (unnecessary) potentially costing patients thousands of dollars in treatment they may not actually need. My fear is that these organizations create an environment that incentivizes the dentists to push or sell treatment. Some may call them quotas. Some may call them production bonuses. Some may just be pushed to produce more by the business team because the finances aren't looking as good. Dentistry is NOT a commodity to be sold to a consumer. It is a health service to be administered to a patient to restore the health of their mouth and body. I believe that due to the business structure of these organizations, they are oftentimes placing money above the needs of the patient.

Second, I firmly believe that if Senate Bill 432 is passed, many small businesses will be harmed. In past years the big argument in favor of a bill like this is that it is "anti-business". In reality, by opposing this bill, you are showing support to small businesses across the state. We know small businesses are the backbone of America. Local dental offices do not have the resources available to compete with private-equity backed national or regional advertising campaigns. Us little guys are already feeling the pinch from the inflation and the economy post-COVID. Adding more stressors to the market will negatively affect many small practices in Kansas. However, not only will small dental practices suffer but so too will other local businesses. Many of the corporate offices contract with certain labs to make crowns, dentures, etc. Those labs are usually not located in Kansas. I send 99% of my cases to two labs right here in Topeka, KS. I'm a small practice and still last year I paid over \$50,000 between those two LOCAL labs. Those businesses could see less business if more and more corporate practices send their cases out of state. The same goes for supply companies, accounting companies, IT companies, and repair companies. Since the practicing dentists in these DSO organizations often do not have decision making power, these choices frequently go to the cheapest bidder or those who they are contracted with. Even at staff lunches or holiday parties I am ALWAYS picking a local, non-chain restaurant to support local people. It doesn't take an economist to know that local communities want their money to stay in the community. Small businesses do just that, whereas a DSO would take the profit usually to a different city or even state. **Being opposed to SB432 is NOT anti-business, it is pro-small business.**

In conclusion, my concern is that the business model of a DSO has many potential negative outcomes. I fear the model incentivizes over-treatment, costing your constituents thousands of dollars in unnecessary treatment. Additionally, the passing of this bill will undoubtedly cause harm to multiple small businesses, not just limited to dental practices.

Thank you for your time and your willingness to hear both sides of the discussion.

If you have any questions following this hearing please do not hesitate to contact me! I can also provide contacts with many other dentists who would agree with my concerns.

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