



Neutral Testimony – SB288
Senate Committee on Judiciary
Senator Kellie Warren, Chair

March 11, 2025
Susan Willis, Government Liaison & Sr. Finance Manager
Wichita Public Schools

Chair Warren and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide neutral testimony regarding SB288. Student safety is of paramount importance for the Wichita Public Schools, the largest school district in Kansas charged with keeping over 46,000 students safe while in our care. The district already has a policy in place to deny access to registered sex offenders while students are present. The district screens all visitors and issues formal restrictions when it discovers a registered sex offender whose child attends one of our schools. Much of this bill falls in line with our current practices.

We do not, however, prevent a parent with such a record from dropping off or picking up his or her child at school as long as they do not enter the school grounds. Transportation to and from school is already challenging for many of our families, and we do not want a child to be kept from school because his or her parent is worried that dropping off or picking up would be considered "enter(ing) onto school property." This is something you may want to consider clarifying in the bill.

Additionally, the definition of "school property" seems very broad. Museums, libraries, zoos, trampoline parks, YMCAs and a host of other properties are "used by a unified school district for instruction, attendance or extracurricular activities." While our own policy prohibits registered sex offenders from attending school-related functions that occur off school grounds, the breadth of the "school property" definition raises questions. Does the non-school business owner have a responsibility to screen other visitors if we use their facility for a field trip? Will businesses and non-profits curtail access for students if obligations they cannot meet arise under this bill? If we rent space in a larger building, are the other tenants expected to prohibit access? We would appreciate clarity around these items as well.

We appreciate the Committee taking the time to consider this bill that further ensures the safety of all students. Our position is neutral but request further clarification of the items noted above should this bill move forward. Thank you.