

Opponent SB 288

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Senate Bill 288 scheduled for hearing before the Kansas state Judiciary Committee on March 11, 2025 is a “fast track” Bill written as a result of concerns parents of a local school district voiced regarding an individual who is a registered sex offender and was on the grounds of school property. Those patrons concerns should be both acknowledged and responded to, by the **local school board** members. Patrons did meet with the Blue Valley School District board. School board members acknowledged they were “discussing a new policy that aims to address parents concerns.” Even though the Blue Valley School District board stated it was discussing policy that would address the patrons concerns, the Kansas State Judiciary Committee made the decision to fast track legislation that would require **ALL** Kansas school districts to adhere to. In preparing SB 288, did this committee have information from the approximate 287 school districts (2022 data – Google search) regarding if, and what their current policies are that provide policy direction to addresses “registered” citizens who wish to attend functions or be on the property of the school district? Did, during it’s “fast tracking” of SB 288 Judiciary Committee members reach out to school districts in Kansas to learn what impact the Bill would have on their current policies.

Moving SB 288 through legislative committees without research and information gathering is wrong. Further information gathering to make an informed decision should occur. When impacting lives as this Bill does, the committee should be willing to support its’ decision based on “good” information which includes receiving input from school districts in Kansas (what current policies do they have regarding individuals who are registered and have family members attending school), input from patrons, hearing from professionals who work with individuals charged with sex offenses, attorneys representing the school districts to ensure there are no lawful violations in creating statutes that impact family members from being involved with their school child, rates if recidivism, possibly civil rights organizations who could address any civil rights violation concerns from new policy, possibly law enforcement who manages the registration process of

individuals required to register, possibly registered citizens of students and other interested parties.

Sadly, Senate Bill 288 passing removes decision making by the local school board and, as written, results in damage to families who have a member that is a registered citizen. The Bill, as written not only impacts the registered person (brother, uncle, grandparent, grandmother, father, mother, cousin, but most importantly impacts the child of a registered family member. In considering passage of S.B. 288, pay attention to the recidivism rates of individuals who have committed a sex offense. Pay attention to highly researched statistical information from professional organizations, research organizations, psychologists and others to report that there are definite changes in rates of recidivism that comes with aging. Will SB 288 acknowledge documented research on recidivism? This Bill, as written, ensure family issues, i.e. trying to explain to a student why his mom, dad, aunt, uncle, brother, sister cannot attend a school function, even be on a property where a school function is being conducted. For a “family member” who has a court ordered thirty year registry requirement, do the proponents of this Bill believe that that individual will, for all thirty years pose a danger? If so, qualified and informed research shows otherwise

Has this committee learned of policies of the approximate 287 school districts with respect to addressing the matter of students who have relatives who are registered citizens? If the Senate Judiciary Committee wishes to get involved in creating policy for the school boards, they need to understand current policies of each district. While this Bill should be removed for further hearing, if the judiciary committee wishes to stay involved with the citizens of Blue Valley School District, then at least conduct “information hearings”, sometime during the summer where ALL individuals can present.

School districts should continue to be managed by local board members, not state elected officials. Does this committee have information about the reported 287 school districts’ policies on individuals who are required to register? Maybe some school boards actually have polices that might be amendable to serving the district well, with respect to managing individuals required to register. In a March 5, 2025 new article in the Johnson County Post, a Kansas legislator stated legislative action via SB288 “could be a guide for other districts across the state. “

That is an inaccurate statement. SB 288 does not say anything about a “guide.” It clearly mandates policy by Kansas legislators.

Everyone in this room wants students and staff to be afforded a safe environment. Fast tracking a Bill certainly without research of understanding of current local school district policies and procedures should not occur, especially not knowing if a negatively impacts current local board policies and procedures. This proposed Bill needs more research, certainly input from school board members, professionals in the mental health field, legal, etc. Moving this Bill forward, at this time, is irresponsible.