



Healthy People Build Strong Communities

Kansas Association of Local Health Departments
715 SW 10th Avenue
Topeka, KS 66612
Phone: 785-271-8391
www.kalhd.org

Testimony on SB 29

Submitted To

The Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

By

Randy Bowman, Executive Director

Kansas Association of Local Health Departments (KALHD)

February 7, 2025

On behalf of the Kansas Association of Local Health Departments (KALHD) and our 100 member Health Departments, I appreciate the opportunity to provide this written testimony on Senate Bill 29. We are an opponent of this bill.

Proposed as the Constitutional Right to Health Freedom Act, this bill seeks to limit or eliminate, the duties of the Secretary of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KHDE), the county or joint board of health, and the local health officer, in responding to any infectious or contagious disease. In doing so, this bill would reduce the response to infectious or contagious diseases to the making of recommendations.

While some citizens will listen to and follow recommendations made by their local health officer, depending upon everyone to make that choice is unrealistic. And removing from state and local health officers the authority for isolation and quarantine [Sec 5(a)], testing for diseases [Sec 6(b)], and the issuance of orders to seek appropriate and necessary treatment or to isolate or quarantine [Sec 7(a-d)], will ultimately put the health of additional citizens at risk. And likely prolong future public health outbreaks while also compounding the effects on individual health, family finances, business profits, and our economy.

Additional concerns with this bill arise in Sec. 1(b) in which the secretary of health and environment may adopt rules and regulations is changed to shall not adopt rules and regulations while inserting new language that the secretary may adopt department policies. This provision would eliminate the established process for oversight and approval of temporary and permanent rules and regulations. Depending on the type of proposed rules and regulations, the following public bodies and officers play a role in rules and regulations: the State Rules and Regulations Board, the Director of the Budget, Secretary of Administration, the Attorney General, the Secretary of State and the Kansas Legislature's Joint Committee on Administrative Rules and Regulations ([see KLRD publication](#)). Effectively eliminating all public oversight in favor of internal departmental policies which have no such external approvals or oversight.

In addition to these concerns, the creation of an action against a public or private employer as described in Sec. 8, presents another area of concern for the impact upon our court system, and increased costs to employers that would be realized through the increased cost of goods and services and taxes.

While I hear the concerns of the proponents, I encourage you to conclude that this bill will not improve any future disease response. Please do not schedule any further consideration or action on this bill or others like it.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to this discussion.