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Resident of Topeka, Kansas  
Proponent Testimony of HB2142  
For the House Education Committee

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Chair Thomas and members of the Committee,

Thank you so much for the opportunity to provide testimony today. I am a resident of Topeka, Kansas and I am deeply supportive of HB2142, requiring schools to comply with legal limits on lead content in school drinking water.

I love Kansas. I was raised in the Kansas City Metropolitan area and just last year bought a house here in Topeka, about 5 minutes from the statehouse. I am a proud midwesterner and happy to call this place my home. But Kansas has a serious lead problem.

The Natural Resource Defense Council released a report last year that shows that Kansas has the 3rd highest per capita rate of lead pipes per 100,000 residents in the county. They estimate Kansas has 5,446 lead pipes per 100,000 residents. Many residents don't even know our water may be contaminated and their families may be at risk.

The harm caused by lead poisoning is well documented. Children exposed to lead may suffer damage to their brain and nervous system. This can cause learning disabilities, stunted growth, hearing loss and more. According to the EPA, water is estimated to make up about 20% of a child's lead exposure.

Even though lead pipes haven't been used by federal and state governments since 1989, KCUR has reported on the difficulties our government is facing to find and replace the mass amount of pipes currently in use. While replacing these pipes should be the ultimate goal, our children are being exposed to lead now. HB2142 offers a reasonable solution to this problem.

Parents shouldn't have to be concerned that their children may be in danger just by drinking out of water fountains at their schools. Our educators and school administrators shouldn't face the risk of lead exposure when they go to work. By passing HB2142 out of this committee favorably, you can give the legislature the opportunity to ensure that our schools are properly filtering lead out of drinking water in our schools.

In closing, I ask you to please vote yes on HB2142. The government is here to serve the people of Kansas. What greater service can be offered than making sure we have safe, clean drinking water for our children? Thank you all for your time and I hope you take my testimony into consideration.