

**Written PROPONENT testimony for HB 2669 AN ACT Codifying the mental health intervention team program administered by the Kansas department for aging and disability services in state statute.**

To: Madam Chair Representative Landwehr and committee members

From: Anna Deines, All Saints Catholic School, Catholic Diocese of Wichita

Date: February 8, 2024

Madam Chair Landwehr and members of the committee,

My name is Anna Deines, and I am a parent of two students who currently attend Catholic schools in the Diocese of Wichita. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony as a PROPONENT to bill HB 2669.

Supporting education and services for young minds growing in this world is one of the most important impacts we can have in society today. I gladly pay taxes and support the public school system, knowing that in some way, my dollar is helping a student have a chance they might not have been able to have otherwise. With that being said, I also decide to invest in Catholic education for my two children in hopes they will academically excel and correspondingly know their Catholic faith in the classroom.

About nine years ago, I unexpectedly found myself victim and hospitalized due to domestic violence. It was not a circumstance I had ever seen or imagined for my life or my young children at the time. I never fathomed having to watch loved ones see such acts of wicked in another human being. My son at the time was five years old. During the long and difficult road to get my children and I to safety, it was a lot of painful memories to have lived through and experience. My son was able to take part in the mental health intervention services at All Saints Catholic School. A trained professional could help talk through some of those tragic things that had happened and help his little mind process that there would be brighter days ahead. This in-school counseling service even helped us get in touch with a family counselor and we began our journey with counseling to a path of understanding and healing.

Years later, I am now able to watch my son almost enter the seventh grade as a happy, confident, smart, and loving young man! I am so appreciative of the services and support Kansas has provided to those in Catholic schools through special programs and grants. There will always be a need in the Catholic education system for these programs and to help keep students be their happiest and best self. We want to see Kansas kids of all backgrounds thriving mentally while going through their adolescent years.

Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the committee, for allowing me to provide support for HB 2669. Please feel free to reach out to me if I can be of assistance to you in this worthy endeavor to protect our children and provide needed services to them. Thank you for your consideration.

Anna Deines  
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