

I am here to testify as a proponent of HB 2732 - School Chaplains for Safer Schools

In September of 2023, a Texas bill was passed that allows school boards to hire chaplains, either as staff members or volunteers. Currently, there are 14 other states that have introduced similar bills.

We introduced a similar bill into the House Education Committee as HB 2732.

It basically says the schools may employ or accept on a volunteer basis a chaplain to provide support, services, and programs for students as directed by the local school board.

Unlike the Texas bill, this bill will not require Boards to make this decision by a certain date. Chaplains will not be required to obtain a teaching license but will be subject to the same criminal background checks as any other district employee.

Chaplains will not replace counselors or mental health workers.

A Chaplain is a certified clergy member who offers spiritual support.

With the decades long problems of bullying, lack of self-esteem, depression, peer pressure, anxiety, and violence, Chaplains can help make schools safer.

Chaplains can benefit schools by promoting less drug use, less violence, and even result in fewer student suicides.

We want the local school boards to be encouraged to use guidelines from certified chaplain associations instead of going through the state board, so action is parent supported and local.

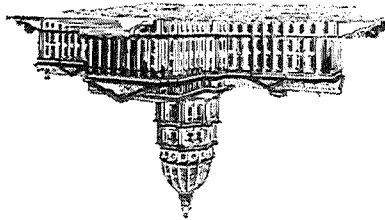
There is a sense that part of the mental health epidemic among students and staff has been a disconnect from spirituality.

February 19, 2024

Chairman Adam Thomas and Committee:

80TH HOUSE REPRESENTATIVE

BILL RHILEY

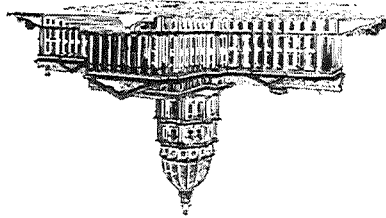


STATE OF KANSAS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATE CAPITOL
TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612
(785) 296-7671
bill.rhiley@house.ks.gov

403 S. WEST ROAD
WELLINGTON, KANSAS 67152

STATE OF KANSAS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES



80TH HOUSE REPRESENTATIVE

BILL RHILEY

403 S. WEST ROAD
WELLINGTON, KANSAS 67152

STATE CAPITOL
TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612
(785) 296-7671
bill.rhiley@house.ks.gov

In this era of conflict, discord, and loneliness, the role of a chaplain has never been more critical. Trained school chaplains will shore up the severe shortage of counselors and mental health workers. Chaplains will be in schools as a moral compass and a moral spiritual guide. Finally, a quote from Kelley Tucker of the International Fellowship of Chaplains – “Chaplaincy is not about getting into a person’s head, but it’s about getting into their heart.”

With Respect

Bill Rhiley
80th District Kansas House of Representatives