

STATE OF KANSAS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

DISTRICT ADDRESS
101 W. SECOND ST.
OTTAWA, KANSAS 66067

STATE CAPITOL
TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612
(785) 296-7655
blaine.finch@house.ks.gov



COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS
CHAIRMAN: JUDICIARY
RULES & JOURNAL
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ENERGY, UTILITIES &
TELECOMMUNICATIONS

BLAINE FINCH
59TH DISTRICT

February 13, 2017

Testimony in Support of HB 2219

Hon. Chairman Hawkins, Vice Chair Concannon, Ranking Member Wilson and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you in support of HB 2219. As the parent of a child with diabetes I have seen firsthand the difficulties and challenges that children face when they are afflicted with this disease. Type 1 diabetes is an autoimmune condition that destroys beta cells in the pancreas that produce insulin. My daughter, Brodie no longer can produce insulin and she will be dependent on thrice daily shots or an automated insulin pump for the rest of her life.

As parents, we understand how hard adolescence can be for kids. It's even harder when kids have a condition that makes them different from everyone else. Brodie has done an amazing job of not letting diabetes slow her down. She is active in cheerleading and track and is going out for soccer this year. She attends summer camps for kids with diabetes and is going to participate in the Ride for a Cure this year. Her mother and I could not be more proud of the girl that she is and the young woman she is becoming.

However, we are both acutely aware of the difficulty she has faced in having diabetes and how many of the young people in her classes and attending her camps have it so much harder. Diabetes tends to run with other diseases, including celiac disease, thyroid conditions and kidney problems. Brodie and her fellow diabetics will be at increased risk for heart and kidney conditions, eye and limb problems and for women an increased risk of pregnancy complications. Once off their parents' insurance, diabetics face expensive costs for testing supplies, insulin, and shots or pump accessories.

These added risks and costs will never go away unless and until a cure for diabetes is found. HB 2219 is not a magic wand and it won't cure all cases of diabetes. However, it will allow for consolidation of data and most importantly it will require an annual work plan be submitted to legislators. This will allow us to know where KDHE believes we can get the best bang for our buck in terms of fighting this disease. Additionally, it will allow outside groups, such as the American Diabetes Association to help coordinate efforts among those states who have similar issues and similar work plans. Having a plan could lead to additional grant funds, private sector help and coordination among neighboring states to help defeat this scourge. Chairman Hawkins, I respectfully request you work this bill. Members of the committee I humbly ask for your support to pass HB 2219 favorably. Though it is a small step, it is a step in the right direction.