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## **Written Proponent Testimony – “Hope Act” HB 2150**

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### **House Committee on K-12 Education Budget**

February 14, 2018

Chairwoman Williams and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for holding a hearing on HB 2150, a proposal relating to bullying that creates the Kansas hope scholarship act. This measure offers a reasonable, practical and workable solution to a real issue facing many students, families and teachers today—the phenomenon of bullying.

Students victimized by bullying experience a sense of hopelessness. They see no alternatives to the daily fear they must confront. Parents and their families are impacted when their children lose joy in their life as well as a zeal for learning. Teachers are a key part of the calculus. They know something’s happening “behind the scenes,” but are oftentimes powerless to act. The “negative cloud” can impact other students in the classroom. Teaching professionals care for each student and their individual needs— isn’t that the goal we all share?

Offering students and families this viable alternative helps lift the negative cloud for everyone. Hope changes everything. Just knowing there is an educational option may help the student and family work through and resolve the instances of bullying. But if a resolution within the school is not found, a change of scene could be a game changer.

The phenomenon of bullying can and does happen everywhere. In fairness, and if we are truly committed to the ultimate goal of a quality education for all, why not allow all families and students the choice of an alternative learning environment?

We urge the members of this committee to look beyond dollars, cents and traditional ideological lines to focus on what’s best for students, families and teachers: a safe, stress-free classroom experience. When it comes to the unfortunate incidence of bullying, the Hope Act truly offers...hope!

Thank you for your consideration.

MOST REVEREND JOHN B. BRUNGARDT, D.D.  
DIOCESE OF DODGE CITY

MOST REVEREND JOSEPH F. NAUMANN, D.D.  
*Board Chairman*  
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