



SMOKY VALLEY

PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT 400

WE CHAMPION FOR ALL STUDENTS

USD 400 OFFICE
126 S MAIN
LINDSBORG, KS 67456

785.227.2981
785.227.2982 FAX

GLEN J. SUPPES
SUPERINTENDENT

ALISSA MAUK
BOARD CLERK

JULIE MARTIN
TREASURER

Written Testimony in Opposition to House Bill 2662 Before
House Committee on K-12 Education Budget

February 14, 2022

My name is Chris Bauer and I currently serve as USD 400, Smoky Valley, Lindsborg, School Board President. I very much appreciate the opportunity to present written testimony in opposition to HB 2662, the parental bill of rights. This bill would increase operating costs and have a negative impact on our school district while stripping elements of local control from school boards. Our state has a proud history of demanding local governance and holding our local boards and commissions accountable. This bill would strip that accountability and place it in Topeka where it should not reside.

Most of the parental rights outlined in the bill already exist under law and local district policies. However, language in the bill will cause districts more expense and add stress to an already overwhelmed teacher corps. Teacher recruitment is already at an all-time low and retention is becoming very difficult. Anytime our district loses a teacher we find it very difficult to locate new teachers to fill the void. Adding unnecessary statewide mandates will only accelerate the exit of good teachers from Kansas and restrict recruitment to Kansas. Schools need to be mindful of what parents want and act accordingly. Local school boards fill that role of accountability. Recent board elections across the state prove parents will hold local boards accountable if their actions are not in line with parent needs and desires. We do not need a state law to make this happen.

I am extremely concerned this bill creates a potential cause of legal action against teachers for simply adapting or improvising curriculum and lessons throughout a year. This would likely lead to districts and teachers having to devote time and money to legal defenses instead of working on student achievement. This would also impact new teacher recruitment and incumbent retention. Our teachers are already not well compensated in comparison to the impact they have on society and adding multiple new levels of documentation and unneeded requirements makes recruiting more difficult.



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I have served as a local school board member for 8 years and I was recently re-elected to my position for a third term. As someone who has learned a lot about education through my service on the board and in advocating for my own children, I have seen what amazing public education we have in Kansas. I am disturbed by the nationwide trend to discount the education and experience of our subject matter experts. Whether one is discussing education, law enforcement or medicine it seems everyone is questioning the motives of dedicated professionals. This bill only enhances that divide. Local school boards should navigate education with local patrons. A statewide mandate, likely unfunded by the legislature, will only hurt education and not improve it.

In closing, I ask you to strongly consider the points of this bill and not recommend it for passage into law. Our local school boards across Kansas know what is best for their communities and we are listening to our patrons. An election process already in place holds the board responsible. Thank you for your time and attention.

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