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Oral - Opponent
House Committee on Education
House Bill 2224
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Chairman Thomas, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony in opposition of House Bill 2224, a bill seeking to extend the school year by 55.5 days.

Under current law, school districts have the freedom to decide how to meet the statutorily required number hours. This bill eliminates local school boards' authority to determine a schedule that best fits the needs of their students and their school district.

Furthermore, we believe that House Bill 2224 essentially creates a legislative mandate of a year-round school calendar, which would have a direct impact on families' ability to schedule meaningful time together. Other year-round school models in other states have been tried and failed because they do not accommodate the demands of a modern work/life balance.

We also question why this bill solely applies to public schools and is not a universal requirement of all schools – public and nonpublic. Because it only applies to public school districts as evidenced by the reference to school districts in the bill, we believe this further perpetuates the division between public and nonpublic schools. Thus, incentivizing more parents to choose a nonpublic school with just 6-hour school days and a more traditional school year calendar over a public school with 8- or 10-hour school days and a year-round school year calendar.

Lastly, Kansas NEA believes this bill jeopardizes the fulfillment of the Gannon decision and significantly reduces the wages of educators. This bill significantly increases the school day and the workday. Both come with an added cost that this bill does not accommodate. Instead, there would be the continued expectation for schools to do even more with even less, but to produce even higher student outcomes.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge you to reject House Bill 2224.