

Written PROPONENT testimony for HB 2669 AN ACT Codifying the mental health intervention team program administered by the Kansas Department for Aging and disability services in state statute.

To: Madam Chair Representative Landwehr and Health and Welfare Committee members
From: Gabriela Raymundo, LBSW, St. Patrick's Catholic School
Date: February 8, 2024

Madam Chair Landwehr and members of the committee,

My name is Gabriela Raymundo, and I am the social worker at St. Patrick's Catholic School. I appreciate you all taking the time to hear my testimony in favor of HB 2669.

Parents and students must have access to mental health support in a day-to-day setting to create a mutual understanding between all involved parties. Without the support of a dedicated mental health provider, many of these children and their families wouldn't have the appropriate resources to handle delicate situations. This can lead to a disconnect in communication from a student's education and home life, only to isolate students from their teachers and family.

Mental health support is important now more than ever, with students being exposed to so much in the world such as social media, bullying, and much worse. The experiences that the students have gone through are enough to put anyone into tears, but having someone to talk to that can *actually* help, makes the world of a difference to a child. I attended St. Patrick's when I was young and had one woman I could meet with weekly. I'd come in, sit down, and just talk with her. I believe if I had this kind of support daily, it would have been a great blessing in my youth.

Our wonderful teachers and staff work tirelessly day in and day out to support all of their students. With the help of a mental health provider that can take in students who are having issues unrelated to their studies that prevent them from learning, teachers can focus on delivering a proper education. I hope that my support for bill HB 2669 and my words shared today help underline the importance of having mental health providers in a school setting daily. I know that the future of these students is in good hands, thank you once again Madam Chair Landwehr and the committee for your time today. God Bless.

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