

February 11, 2020

Dear Kansas House Representatives:

I am writing to express my support for continuing to allow the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) to determine vaccine requirements for school-aged children. I am opposed to legislative action that would transfer authority over immunization requirements for school-aged children from the KDHE to the legislature or other bodies which do not have public health expertise.

Right now, over a thousand people in China are reported to have died of the COVID-19 (or “novel coronavirus”). This virus has spread to other nations, including the United States. The rapid spread of COVID-19 in China and elsewhere illustrates the danger posed by viral infections. While no vaccine for COVID-19 currently exists, outbreaks of virus infections for which immunization is possible such as measles occur periodically in the U.S.

Any action which removes authority over immunization policy from bodies which have public health expertise and gives this authority to political or ideological bodies puts the Kansas public at risk; in this case, proposed legislation if adopted could put the children of Kansas at risk. I urge you to allow the KDHE to continue to determine immunization requirements for school-aged children.

Sincerely,

K. Lancaster

Wichita, Kansas