

February 11, 2020

Chairman Huebert, Vice Chair Dietrich, and House Education Committee,

I am the Health Service Coordinator for the Garden City School District as well as a Registered Nurse for 34 years. I fear very much that the change to HB 2601 would jeopardize our student's health and our community wellbeing.

Decisions to make changes to immunization requirements should continue to be the responsibility of the experts at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE), as they have carefully done since 1979. KDHE consults employees with expertise in public health, medicine, and health care administration who weigh the scientific evidence to determine necessary changes to immunization requirements.

It is important that the list of required vaccines remain in the current regulation process rather than being individually listed as statutes due to the ability to respond to changes in ACIP (Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices) recommendations time line. A new vaccine may be recommended at any of the quarterly meetings based on evidence which would make it best practice for inclusion in our required list.

HB 2601 places responsibility for determining school requirements with the state legislature, which would politicize the issue of immunizations. Immunizations have led to significant decrease and eradication of many infectious diseases such as polio, measles, mumps, pertussis, and others. These immunization requirements protect students, their families, and communities from serious, potentially fatal diseases.

I have been in nursing long enough to remember what a baby with whooping cough (Pertussis) sounds like or watching a child that has Haemophilus influenza meningitis (what the HIB vaccine protects against) have seizures and may not leave the hospital alive. These diseases are rare, but do still happen, but due to vaccines have been dramatically reduced. In our school district within the last seven years we have death with outbreaks of Pertussis, measles and mumps.

I would like to express my strong opposition to HB 2601 and respectfully request you note no when this bill is considered in the House Education Committee.

Respectfully,

Michelle Shull, BSN, RN, NCSN

Health Service Coordinator

Garden City School District, USD 457