

House of Representatives Committee on Education

Proponent Testimony on HB 2690

Given by Linda Highland on February 20, 2020

Thank you for this opportunity to come before you as a proponent for HB 2690. My concern is that the practice of giving certain tests, questionnaires, surveys and examinations is overused in our schools today.

The Communities That Care Survey (CTC) is just one example of a survey that has been widely used in Kansas schools for 25 years as a tool for receiving grants for many programs. A growing number of agencies use the unreliable data collected from the CTC survey. It is also the survey used to establish the supposed need for drug testing students. This hour-long survey is administered four times in a student's life, in 6th, 8th, 10th, and 12th grades, and violates a student's right to privacy by asking very personal questions about drug and alcohol use, family life issues, gun violence, if they think that life is not worth it, and much more. The very questions that it asks place dangerous suggestions in the minds of our youth.

With this amending legislation of the 2014 Student Data Privacy Act, the parent or guardian must be shown copies of the actual tests, questionnaires, surveys, and examinations, and must give written permission to opt in their child to participate. My adult children were given the CTC survey which violated their right to privacy and our rights as parents. After the 2014 Student Data Privacy Act passed, I was shown the CTC survey and was outraged by the nature of the questions, only to find out our children had been abused by being coerced into taking it without our consent.

More and more legislators, parents, and citizens groups are questioning the validity of the survey based upon the known widespread false reporting by the students. I personally have asked young adults about their recollections of taking the survey. It is disturbing that, of all the tests in their education career, this survey stands out and is always remembered by young people. I am also told that they so disliked like taking the CTC Survey that many self-reported the worst possible answers that can be given.

I believe the CTC Survey is a teaching tool that trains students in many dangerous lifestyles, just by the very reading of the survey. What youth focus upon comes about in their lives. "As he thinketh in his heart, so he is," Proverbs 23:7. Plus, students are told there are no right or wrong answers. So, a young 6th grader is now no longer an innocent child, but instead fully informed on all the possible dangerous activities of which he could become involved. Is this fair to these young minds?

Is taking this survey going to solve anything in a student's life? It has been administered since 1994 in Kansas schools, all the while, all the categories it questions have gotten worse for our youth.

In summation, the CTC Survey: 1. Has failed to solve anything 2. Promotes dangerous lifestyles 3. Validity of the data is questionable 4. Violates a student's right to privacy 5. Violates parental and guardian rights 6. Is costly to the state and local school districts 7. Wastes precious classroom time.

I humbly ask you to recognize that the CTC Survey, and other behavioral testing, is being overused in our Kansas schools. Parental oversight is needed to correct this ominous trend. Please help protect our Kansas students from growing data collection invasion of their private lives and support HB 2690.