

House of Representatives Committee on Education
Proponent Testimony on HB 2690
Given by Morgan Riat on 2-20-2020

I appreciate the opportunity to speak in front of you all today as a proponent for the House Bill 2690. My concern is that tests like the one we're discussing are not only a violation of student rights but also provide unreliable data, while being costly to administer when we already have adequate information on record to get the same results.

It is my understanding that the CTC (communities that care) test has been used for about 25 years as a tool for schools to receive program grants. As a young Kansan graduating in 2017, I was able to experience the displeasure of taking this test without choice. During this near hour long test I was grilled on subjects revolving around drug & alcohol use as well as personal subjects relating to my home life.

After and during this survey I began wondering how a quiz like this could be used as a reliable source of information and I firmly believe that it can not be used reliably. Question number sixty-three of the quiz asks the quiz recipient "How many times have you used marijuana in the last thirty days?" This is followed by seven options to answer with. I got to thinking that even though I myself had not ever and will never use recreational drugs those in my class that have would most certainly not be willing to confess to this illegal action by way of a quiz that was given by the school. The next thought that entered my mind was that an individual taking the test could also mark wrong answers to falsify the test results filling in every bubble they could that hinted at drug and alcohol use or maybe even problems at home.

Kansas's student data privacy act allows parents to view a blank copy of the test administered to their child. Question number 122 asks the recipient "Do you feel close to your mother" Not only is this question insensitive and irrelevant depending on the student's circumstances a question like this could trigger stress, cause mental pain, or even cause the test taker to cause harm to themselves or others.

Coming from a Law Enforcement family I know the struggles of our Officers and Deputies and have great respect for all they do working to keep our communities safe. I also respect and appreciate Juvenile Intake and their work to keep our youth safe. I have limited knowledge of intake's processes, but I do know that they possess most if not all the information in this test and their data is most certainly more relevant. They are the ones on the front lines working diligently with law enforcement. They are face to face with juveniles that are at risk building bonds and trusts with these young people who genuinely need their help. Youth on probation get re-assessed every six months by juvenile intake face to face regarding drug and alcohol use as well as social situations and home life. Kansas Department of Corrections (KDOC) receives this data from the time of intake clear on through probation making it accessible to the State of Kansas. This information is far more reliable by focusing on children at risk versus a widespread test with surely more accurate results.

As a young Kansan I respectfully ask you to consider our students privacy, the reliability of the data we collect, and the money our schools spend on data that we already possess.

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