

House Bill 2498
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Good Afternoon Chairperson Landwehr and members of the committee. I am submitting this testimony to you today as a lifelong Kansan. I was born, raised, educated, wed, worked, and my husband and I have raised our children and are watching our grandchildren grow here as well. I am submitting this testimony with serious concern for the safety of our families and in the long-term, the effects this bill could have on public health.

House Bill 2498 is taking a step to limit the authority of our public health experts and to target one vaccine, placing in statute a prohibition of requirement. This prohibition is not based on need; there is no action currently being taken to require this vaccine. To remove an individual vaccine from the processes in place administered by Kansas' public health experts is not only concerning; it is dangerous to the health and wellness of our communities and our state.

Committee Members - do not be deceived. This effort is not an action with a narrow scope, nor it is new. Last session SB212, while more sweeping, was an effort to change the established process by which changes were made to the list of required vaccines for attendance at a school or childcare facility. In addition, in 2020, HB2601 was brought forth by many of the same proponents, that bill died in committee. The reason it was not pushed forward is because it was bad policy. HB2498 is also bad policy.

The process for making changes to the list of mandatory school vaccinations is based in science, not misinformation or personal agendas. All fifty states have statutes which rely upon public health officials through their state departments of health to: analyze the science, understand the status of health and disease risk in their states, and respond to recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). The state department of health can respond timely to all of these elements and when necessary, adjust the list of required vaccines to reduce the risk of severe disease and disease sequela, including death. Their action are not limited to additions to the list of requirement but also to potentially remove items.

Listing this vaccine (or others) in statute will limit the ability of our public health experts to respond to changing conditions and current sciences; putting them in line to wait on legislative process, and to rely upon the hope that political agendas would not take precedence over science and ultimately the wellbeing of our children, communities, and state.

I am asking you to truly consider the effect that this bill will have over time if passed. I ask you to prioritize the long-term health of our children over misinformation and fear.

I ask you to vote No on HB2498.