



**House Committee on Education
Testimony in Opposition of HB 2601**

**Joann Wheeler BSN RN, Maize Nursing Coordinator/School Nurse
February 13, 2020**

Chairman Huebert and Members of the Committee,

I am writing to express my concern and **opposition to House Bill No. 2601**, "An Act concerning education; relating to childhood immunizations required for child care facility and school attendance; amending K.S.A. 65-508 and 72-6262."

Immunizations are one of the most significant public health interventions in history. The incidence and impact of vaccine preventable diseases have been drastically reduced. History shows that some diseases like smallpox have been eradicated. This was made possible through immunizations. Immunizations have improved the health of students and the public in general.

In my 26 years as a school nurse, I have seen students with vaccine preventable diseases. I feel it is imperative that immunizations are regulated by the secretary of health and are not stipulated in the revised statute. The proposed revision does provide the secretary of Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) the authority to add or remove vaccinations that are listed. However, it then adds an expiration date of July 1 of the following calendar year after adoption. The expiration date does not provide flexibility to add vaccines on a long-term basis in response to changes from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommendations. By removing the regulatory authority of public health experts at KDHE to determine vaccination requirements, HB 2601 risks Kansas' ability to respond to the best scientific recommendations for immunizations as set forth by the ACIP to protect our children from vaccine-preventable diseases. Likewise, the listing of diseases in the statute could lead to confusion as recommendations change.

ACIP uses a very extensive process to review all available evidence-based science before making a recommendation or changing a recommendation on a vaccine. ACIP uses a variety of subject matter experts in workgroups to do extensive research and consideration prior to recommendations being made or changed. I feel that the secretary of KDHE should retain the authority over immunizations that are required. The current administrative process allows a timely, evidence-based response to changes in ACIP recommendations.

In Kansas, minimal changes have been made to the list of school vaccination requirements, only three times in the past 41 years. The current regulation process is used only as necessary to align Kansas childcare and school requirements with the best evidence-based, scientific recommendations available.

Thank you for the opportunity to present my concern. In summary, I **oppose HB 2601** and I am in favor of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment Secretary retaining the flexibility and authority to be responsive to new vaccines recommended by the ACIP as part of the routine child and adolescent vaccination schedule.

Joann Wheeler BSN RN
Maize School Nurse, Maize USD 266