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Kansas Action for Children
Proponent Written Testimony on HB 2407
House Committee on Child Welfare and Foster Care

Chairperson Concannon and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to discuss HB 2407, which would change parental consent requirements for non-academic questionnaires. Kansas Action for Children is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization working to make Kansas a place where every child has the opportunity to grow up healthy and thrive.

Currently, parents are required to provide consent, or “opt-in,” for their children to participate in non-academic school surveys. This process can be confusing for parents on enrollment days when they are inundated with forms to complete, potentially leading them to believe that they are opting out instead of in. Instead, with an “opt-out” policy as HB 2407 proposes, school districts will be able to conduct surveys in a way that enables school districts to truly assess how students are doing, as well as simplify the process for parents.

The ability to conduct reliable, accurate surveys is critical for all stakeholders in Kansas. Policymakers and advocates rely on strong data to guide decisions that impact all Kansas children and the services they receive. For instance, Kansas Action for Children uses data from surveys, like the Kansas Communities that Care student survey, as a resource for creating materials for policymakers, partners, and the public. Without this data, not all children can be accurately considered in policymaking.

This bill still retains parental authority to decide the participation of their children, which we recognize is an important right. However, this change will increase participation in surveys, enabling school districts to receive more accurate data. As stakeholders in the education of Kansas children, we need accurate measures of how students are doing so that our state can continue to thrive.

Thank you for the opportunity to share information with you today. Feel free to reach me if you have any questions at daniel@kac.org.