

February 15, 2022

Kansas State Legislature

Committee on K-12 Education Budget

Regarding HB 2662 Establishing the parents' bill of rights and academic transparency act,

Position: Oppose

Dear Chair Williams and Committee Members:

My name is Jawanda Mast. I am mom to a 22-year-old daughter Rachel who has Down syndrome. She graduated from Olathe South High School in 2018. We have both testified before Kansas legislative committees on concerns related to education, disability, and organ nondiscrimination.

I am writing in opposition to House Bill 2662. I have serious concerns about parts of this bill. Specifically, I have concerns with one clause:

- Section 1(c)(6), which prevents schools from enforcing any requirements regarding student vaccinations.

This would greatly increase the risk that schools will have outbreaks of infectious disease including some that may kill them.

Many required vaccines (MMR, pertussis, varicella, etc.) not only protect the person who receives them, they also prevent that person from transmitting disease to others. This is important because some people in our society cannot be vaccinated for medical reasons. They rely on those around them being vaccinated to shield them from disease — a concept called herd immunity.

I believe this legislation could create an environment where children with disabilities could not be provided a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education (IDEA) act. I suspect it may also violate some tenets of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA.)

Honestly, this bill terrifies me. It terrifies me to think we could go back in time and have outbreaks of preventable diseases that will have a devastating impact on our children and our society. We are fortunate because my daughter was able to take all her vaccines without issue. We have friends in the disability community and beyond who could not take vaccines because they were immunocompromised or had allergies. I have watched the fear and anxiety as these families seek to protect their children.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,

Jawanda Barnett Mast

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