



February 20, 2019

Re: Testimony in Opposition of HB2330

To House Committee on Education:

My name is Liz Hamor. I grew up in Great Bend, Ks, met my husband at college, and taught elementary students for a few years before we started a family. We now live in the Wichita area with our two school-aged children and our puppy. Five years ago, I followed my calling to start a GLSEN Chapter in Wichita, and I have been advocating for and with students ever since. I now work with K-12 schools across Kansas (though mostly still in the Greater Wichita area) helping them ensure that ALL of their students feel safe, valued, and respected in school.

I do a lot of direct advocacy with students, being called in by them and their parents when their schools won't take their complaints of bullying seriously. I know of dozens of instances in which schools are failing students. I fully agree that schools need to be held more accountable and have more oversight. **However, I do not feel that HB2330 is the right bill to fill this need.**

As a former educator and someone who works with admins across the state, I feel that many of them would not appreciate the one-size-fits-all approach of HB2330. While I DO think that HB2330 would make a great model policy for districts to tweak and make their own, I don't believe that this policy is right for every district. Kansas districts range from under 55 students in Healy, Kansas, (USD468) to over 50,000 students in Wichita (USD259). I believe districts with such diverse needs require a little autonomy to create the policies that will work for their needs, within the capacities that they have.

Most of my concerns about HB2330 are due to the very prescriptive language. For example, the reporting requirements giving 24 hours for educators or principals to take specific actions would be great guidance, but I foresee all types of issues with making them requirements. What if the only principal in the district is sick? Or in a training? Or a parent isn't available to be contacted in the required time? Also, having a law mandate how and exactly when Superintendents report to their Boards is micromanage-y. While I was an educator, I felt extreme frustration with the amount of bureaucracy and red tape created by people who'd never been in a classroom that dictated my days and over-ruled the best practices that I'd spent years learning in order to obtain my education degrees. The point: educators and administrators, the experts of this domain, should have some input on the policies that shape their environments.

In conclusion, I believe that we definitely need to require schools to have better bullying prevention policies and procedures. I think guidance from the state BOE would be great. However, I am also a fan of School Boards and administrators working together to implement policies that mandate deadlines and requirements that work for their unique districts.

Regards,
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Chapter Director

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