



PO Box 654  
Lawrence, KS 66044  
<https://kansasinterfaithaction.org>  
(913) 232-2336

**Testimony by Rev. Lois Harder in Opposition to HB 2498**, Prohibiting the secretary of health and environment from requiring COVID-19 vaccination for children attending school.  
**House Committee on Health and Human Services, Rep. Brenda Landwehr, chair**  
**February 21, 2022**

Mme. Chair, Ranking Member Ruiz, Members of the Committee,

My name is Rev. Lois Harder, and I serve as associate pastor at Alexanderwohl Mennonite Church in Goessel, Kansas. I am here representing Kansas Interfaith Action, a statewide, multifaith advocacy organization which represents primarily Mainline Protestant, Jewish and Muslim communities and individuals on important public policy issues. I'm speaking today in opposition to HB 2498.

Although we acknowledge the controversy around COVID vaccination mandates, KIFA and the denominations and communities of faith that make it up have taken a supportive position on vaccines, including COVID vaccines. We consider it a matter of the imperative to save human life, or as Deut. 30:19 says, "I have set life and death, blessing and curse before you. Now choose life—so that you and your descendants will live." We oppose the legislation on that basis.

In addition, we are also concerned that this bill will become the "camel's nose in the tent" for the rescinding of all childhood immunization requirements. KIFA and its supporters want to say as clearly as possible that we are implacably opposed to the rescinding of childhood vaccination requirements. We consider these to be gifts of God – through smart and dedicated people – and they have saved millions of lives and prevented countless cases of measles, mumps, rubella, polio, etc.

I realize that this is not what this bill proposes, but we are very concerned that this bill would be the first step down that terrible path.

We think this bill is unnecessary because KDHE has not required COVID vaccinations, and there's no indication that it wants to or plans to. Many younger students aren't even eligible for vaccinations. But we also oppose this bill because we support childhood immunizations, and don't want to see Kansas start down the path the rescinding the requirement for them.

Thank you, and I'll stand for questions at the appropriate time.

Rev. Lois Harder  
Goessel, Kansas  
(316) 617-3497  
loisharder1@gmail.com