



Testimony of the **Kansas Public Health Association** to the
Kansas Senate Committee on Judiciary
Opponent for SB 304 • **March 26, 2021**

Chairwoman Warren and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in opposition to SB 304, a bill which removes the sunset provision in the COVID-19 contact tracing privacy act.

Immediately following any emergency response, public health professionals and our partners routinely conduct a “hot wash”, a facilitated discussion or debrief to capture issues that arose during the event. Like all public health events prior to COVID-19, the systems response to the pandemic will require a thorough review. We know that case investigation and contact tracing are critical to slowing or stopping the spread of infectious diseases. And no doubt these elements will be part of any post event analysis.

Until all systems central to the pandemic response are in a position to fully participate in exploring how we as a state might improve any future response, including exploring universal rules for all contact tracing, we ask that the COVID-19 contact tracing privacy act be allowed to sunset as originally intended. Other standing laws, rules, and regulations already in place will adequately safeguard privacy on COVID-19 contact tracing work (as they do for all other diseases). In fact, we are not aware of any major issues with how contact tracing has been implemented in the past. This is especially important given contact tracing has been a central public health response to infectious disease outbreaks for decades.

Emergency response is complicated enough, creating rules and systems unique to one disease/virus creates confusion for those tasked with implementing a response. While work to control COVID-19 remains, we are hopeful that in the near future this virus can be managed like many other vaccine-preventable (yet reportable) diseases. We thank the committee for its work and ask that you allow this act to sunset as originally intended.

Respectfully Submitted,

Brandon Skidmore, President
Kansas Public Health Association

KPHA is a professional association for Kansas public health practitioners, professionals, and advocates. As a voice for public health, KPHA provides a forum for individuals and organizations to work collectively to assure conditions in which Kansans' lives will be healthy. *(This position reflects the collective position of association members through the action of the Board of Directors and may not necessarily reflect the views of each KPHA member's employer.)*