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House Education Budget Committee

Testimony on HB 2580

Presented by Cheryl L. Semmel, Executive Director

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Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you on HB 2580, a bill concerning charter schools. Schools take seriously the task of preparing Kansas' future workforce. And, because solutions are not born in isolation, we know it's important to communicate **and engage** our partners – legislators, parents and community leaders. Together, we can accomplish more for Kansas kids.

USA|Kansas is here today in opposition to HB 2580, in part because we believe it is unnecessary and because we have concerns about the authorization and governance process outlined in the bill. As education and community leaders, we recognize that our classrooms and schools must be dynamic and innovative to best prepare students for the 21st century workforce.

Administrators believe that schools should continually evolve to meet the diverse needs of our students. We also believe that children and families have access to a wide array of learning opportunities, including public schools, virtual schools, charter schools, magnet schools, private schools and home schooling.

It is also important to recognize that there are districts throughout our State – rural and urban; small and large – that have implemented high quality, innovative programs intended to foster greater student engagement and improve student achievement. These programs are focused on enhancing the student learning experience and providing alternative delivery options.

Several weeks ago, you had the opportunity to hear about innovative programs in districts throughout Kansas – programs such as the Stafford Entrepreneurship and Economic Development (SEED) program, the Walton Rural Life Center Charter School and the Center for Advanced Professional Studies (CAPS). **Each of these innovative programs was developed and implemented within the existing system.**

These innovative programs had a common theme, a belief that high quality education is key to the economic viability of the state. These school districts have **leveraged relationships with community leaders and organizations, businesses or post-secondary education**