



Thursday February 15th, at 9:00 218-N

To: House Committee on Children and Seniors

Representative Davis, Chair

Representative Gallagher, Vice Chair

From: Kansas Association of Special Education Directors

Heath Peine

**RE: HB2745 RELATING TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TRANSITIONS BILL OF RIGHTS TASK FORCE**

**Opposition**

Chairs & Committee Members,

I'm writing to you as a parent of a child with a disability, a member of the board of directors for a non-profit organization that serves individuals with disabilities, an Assistant Superintendent of USD 353 and the President-Elect of the Kansas Association of Special Education Administrators.

I oppose HB2745 as it seems to be an attempt to shift control of educational services from the Kansas State Board of Education and the Kansas State Department of Education to a task force. Moving control of our education system out of the hands of our educational experts is not the best way to improve services for our population. I have to wonder, what might be some ways we can increase our support of individuals with disabilities as they transition away from school and into the community without appointing a task force to take control of the educational system? Would it be more productive and direct to instead begin a review of transition services and community supports?

Beyond the basic idea of shifting the power, there are several concerns with this bill:

- There isn't balance with the committee members. The committee is mostly made up of disability advocates and is light on those with educational expertise.
- As opposed to the task force choosing a chair, it would make more sense for the state board member to serve as chair in order help them maintain a semblance of their role in education under this bill.



- An attorney with expertise in special education law is not included in the committee. That level of knowledge vital to the process given the focus of the bill on items that are already covered in other state and federal laws.
- This document appears to give the task force the power to review, rewrite and produce any documents that come from the department of education that are intended to educate parents and students regarding rights or resources regardless of their connection to transitions. Why would the task force need powers that broad and far reaching?
- The bill also requires the State Board of Education to distribute any documentation created by the task force as long as they are deemed “factually correct.” Who will determine what is and is not “factually correct?”

I believe HB2745 asks for powers and rights concerning education far broader than should be allowed to any task force. This bill goes too far to attempt to solve some perceived problem regarding transition services. There is no need for a shift of power over education in order to research at what is provided for our citizens in the educational system and in the community and determine how we can make improvements.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony.

Sincerely,

Heath Peine