



March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Written Testimony in Opposition to SB 489

Chairman Hilderbrand and members of the Public Health and Welfare Committee,

Thank you for allowing me an opportunity to provide written testimony in opposition to House Bill 2498. My name is Ali Hilton and I am the program director for the Mid America Immunization Coalition (MAIC), a program of Nurture KC. MAIC is comprised of community members and professionals within the public health sector, providing education and advocacy on the lifesaving importance of being immunized.

SB 489 is addressing a situation that does not exist. This bill preemptively disrupts the Kansas Department of Health and Environment's (KDHE) authority to continue to maintain the vaccine schedule by eliminating the opportunity to provide expert guidance on a specific vaccine. KDHE has made no attempt to alter the vaccine schedule to include COVID-19 immunization as a requirement. Deviating from KDHE's authority sets precedence for harm to public health by creating distance between the experts in public health and immunization authority. This is a situation in which the majority of Kansas voters agree. The people of Kansas do not want to see KDHE authority removed.

Nurture KC commissioned a statewide survey, conducted by Public Opinion Strategies, to gauge public attitudes regarding routine vaccinations in Kansas. This included polling on KDHE's expert, and informed authority over the vaccination schedule. The polling concluded that 85% of Kansans, across the partisan spectrum, believe KDHE should be in charge of vaccine wellness policy. In addition to that majority, 73% of Kansas voters oppose moving KDHE's vaccine authority to Kansas legislature and 84% believe doing so would politicize disease prevention. Kansas voters overwhelmingly agree that legislation is not the place for decisions on diseases prevention, immunizations, or public health. For a more detailed version of the polling results, please visit [nurturekc.org](http://nurturekc.org).

SB 489 would begin removing the long standing, and informed authority of KDHE over the vaccination schedule. Our opposition to this bill is simple. We want to continue to allow KDHE the authority to protect our children and communities by setting the vaccine standards that are informed by evidence based practices and the qualified medical community.

Thank you for your consideration of this important issue.

With much appreciation,

Ali Hilton