

Written PROPONENT testimony for HB 2669 AN ACT Codifying the mental health intervention team program administered by the Kansas department for aging and disability services in state statute.

To: Madam Chair Representative Landwehr and committee members

From: Mr. Gerry Hamilton, St. Anne Catholic School, Diocese of Wichita, KS

Date: February 8, 2024

Madam Chair Landwehr and members of the committee,

My name is Gerry Hamilton, and I am the principal at St. Anne Catholic School in South Wichita. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony as a PROPONENT to bill HB 2669.

I have been in this position for the past four years starting during the pandemic. The enrollment population here is very diverse. We have over 80% free and reduced student headcount, and 75% minority enrollment for the past four years.

Many of our students arrive each morning at school with many adverse childhood experiences, (ACEs), that are not in their control. One of our 5th graders lives in a single parent household with four stepsiblings and a father that is not in the picture on a regular basis. They have good days and bad days. It all depends on his temperament when he arrives at school. Our Social Worker has been very beneficial in helping them still attending our school, and now, being more successful.

Last year we had another student that their only parent figure in their life passed away. This student had a very difficult time adjusting to being around other students that were not going through the same trial they were going through. Again, our Social Worker made it a priority to visit with student multiple times a week, and now, he is in high school doing well.

Finally, our Social Worker has assisted in providing for the needs of our more disadvantaged students and families by securing funding for coats, shoes, and personal hygiene products for our students and families at no cost them. This has been an immense benefit to our students and parents as they better prioritize their concerns on the education of their child(ren).

Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the committee, for allowing me to provide support for HB 2669. Please feel free to reach out to me if I can be of assistance to you in this worthy endeavor to protect our children and provide needed services to them. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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