

House Judiciary Committee

Testimony in support of SB 157

March 17, 2015

My name is JoVoli Clark. I have been teaching for over 6 years and a parent for 8 years. I have taught grades kindergarten through 5th grade and worked with students of all kinds from various backgrounds. Today I would like to talk to you about a very special group of students, those with ADD.

A few years ago, our own son started showing some quirky qualities and when our doctor felt concern as well, we took him to KU Med for a formal evaluation. The results of that evaluation gave us some ideas on how to better manage our son's behaviors and meet his needs. One of those suggestions had my husband and I facing the same dilemma as many other parents, to medicate or not to medicate our son for ADD. My husband and I are both educators and together we said, "No, thank you."

You might wonder why two educated adults might not want their struggling son to take medications that could help him focus and be more productive, but I have seen firsthand how medicating children can be tricky and possibly harmful. I never blame parents who take this risk, but I don't think anyone should be forced to.

In my first teaching experience, I had a young man who had many behavior concerns. We were working hard to manage those behaviors and help him find success in the classroom. I can't even begin to explain how all over the place this kindergarten student was but, long story short, he had a mental break while waiting for the bus and ended up in the hospital. This young boy had been over medicated and the results were very traumatic. He spent two weeks in a hospital before he was able to return home.

This was not my only experience with a young child being over medicated, with the process of finding the right amount taking months. We did not want to take that kind of a risk and don't think it is anyone else's place to tell us what is best for our child when something is not medically necessary. We discussed it with our doctor, we weighed the risk and the benefits and we did what we felt was best for our son.

No parent should have to worry about the government or a government agency second guessing a decision that they have made about their child's well-being regarding medication that is not medically necessary. SB157 is an important bill making sure that parents can make these tough decisions with their doctors and not have outside voices carrying weight in these important elective medications.

Sincerely, JoVoli Clark LeRoy, Kansas