

MINUTES OF THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Jean Schodorf at 1:30 p.m. on February 17, 2009, in Room 545-N of the Capitol.

All members were present except:

Senator Chris Steineger- excused
Senator Susan Wagle- excused

Committee staff present:

Theresa Kiernan, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Matt Sterling, Office of the Revisor of Statutes
Martha Dorsey, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Sharon Wenger, Kansas Legislative Research Department
Dorothy Gerhardt, Committee Assistant

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Marcus McNeal, Youth Mayor, Mayor's Youth Council, Wichita
Rachel King, Mayor's Youth Council, Wichita
Drew Papadelis, Mayor's Youth Council, Wichita
Carrie Greenwood, Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy
Chris Roberson, Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy
Andrew Crane, Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy
Anne-Marie Hughey, SKIL Resource Center
Julia Fonseca, Executive Director, Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy (written only)
Mark Desetti, KNEA and KASB

Others attending:

See attached list.

Mayor's Youth Council, Wichita, KS

Marcus McNeal, Youth Mayor, Mayor's Youth Council, Wichita, (Attachment 1) Rachel King and Drew Papadelis, also of the Mayor's Youth Council of Wichita, presented testimony in support of restoring funding for driver's education training in the state's public schools. The mission of the Wichita Mayor's Youth Council is "To provide Wichita youth with the opportunity to weigh in on community issues and learn about city government." Their current mission of service is to lobby on the issue of driver's education funding in the 2009-2010 budget. The research conducted regarding automobile accidents, fatal accidents, injury accidents, ages of drivers involved in accidents and numbers of accident victims having taken driver's education training was presented in the Senate Education Committee.

Hearing on **SB 162 - Disability history and awareness**

Carrie Greenwood, (Attachment 2), Chris Roberson, (Attachment 3), and Andrew Crane, all with the Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy (Attachment 4), and Anne-Marie Hughey, SKIL Resource Center (Attachment 5) provided testimony in support of **SB 162** which provides for designating the last two weeks in January of each year as disability history and awareness weeks. The state board shall assist school districts in the implementation of programs which provide a course of instruction on disability history and disability awareness during these weeks. Carrie, Chris, Andrew and Anne-Marie each provided personal testimony regarding living with a disability. Julia Fonseca, Executive Director, Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy (written only) (Attachment 6), provided written testimony in support of the legislation.

Mark Desetti, representing the Kansas National Education Association and Kansas Association of School Boards, (Attachment 7) provided testimony in opposition to **SB 162**. Support for opposition of the legislation included the fiscal note of a \$3,000 mandate imposed on schools following the House and Senate vote to cut funding for schools for students with disabilities.

The hearing on **SB 162** was closed.

CONTINUATION SHEET

Minutes of the Senate Education Committee at 1:30 p.m. on February 17, 2009, in Room 545-N of the Capitol.

Senator Vratil moved to recommend SB 162 favorable for passage. The motion was seconded by Senator Umbarger. Motion carried on a voice vote.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 18, 2009.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.

EDUCATION COMMITTEE GUEST LIST

DATE: February 17, 2009

NAME	REPRESENTING	
Eldon L. Chlumsky	Wichita Public Schools	
Debbie Depew	L L L	
Debbie Crane	Wichita Kyea	
Cheryl Roberson	Wichita - Kyea	
Marissa Neises	Mayor's Youth Council	
Sharmini Lawless	↓	
Jessica Craft		
Allie Pader		
Sami Denning		
Minhew Tamong		
Schuyler Jack Stump		
Lauren Cheselborough		
Kamilah Sharpe		
EMILY Stephenson		Mayors Youth Council
Lina Chang		↓
Leslie Wyckoff		
*Kayla Coleman		
Jordan Ray		
Dodie Wellshear	USA / Kansas	
Bill Brady	SFFF	
KOB MEALY	KENNEDY & Assoc.	
Elena Lincoln	KSDE	
Patty Gray	KSDE	
April Holman	Kansas Action for Children	

EDUCATION COMMITTEE GUEST LIST

DATE: February 17, 2009

NAME	REPRESENTING
Brooke Williams	MYC
Victoria Pitts	MYC
Mark Tallman	KASB
Mark DeSetti	KNEA
Carrie Greenwood	KYEA
Julia Forzeca	KYEA
Thad Smith	KYEA
Jennifer Schwartz	KACIL
Allison Wegner	Mayor's Youth Council
Anna Hurst	Mayor's Youth Council
Kylie Aspegren	Mayor's Youth Council
Daniel Depeu	MYC
Lexie Baldwin	Mayor's Youth Council
Missy Taylor	Kansas Families for Education
Andrew Cudney	KYEA
He Maria Hoff	SKIL

To: Senate Committee on Education

Tuesday, February 17, 2009

RE: Driver Education Funding

The Wichita Mayor's Youth Council's mission is simple: "To provide Wichita youth with the opportunity to weigh in on community issues and learn about city government." Put simply, we are an organization for youth by youth and plan on continuing that mission of service as we lobby on the issue of driver's education funding in the 2009-2010 budget.

The average cost of private driver's ed. in Kansas is \$370. Public driver's ed. courses, however, only cost \$215. By taking the driver's ed. offered at one's high school, you save around \$150. On average, it costs \$1,400 a year to insure a teenage driver. But by taking driver's ed., though, you can save at least ten percent on insurance. That's a savings of at least \$140 a year. In today's economy, those savings mean a lot.

In the 2009-2010 budgets there is zero funding proposed for public driver's ed. programs. There are several reasons why driver's ed. is important. Most obviously, it is critical for preparing teenagers to drive. Uneducated drivers pose a threat not only to their own safety, but to the safety of all other drivers on the road.

In the United States, there is an automobile crash every ten seconds. One teenager is killed every hour in an accident. Automobile crashes are the leading cause of death of teenagers in the U.S. Surprisingly, young people ages 15-20 make up only 6.7% of the driving population, but are responsible for 15% of all fatal crashes.

In its July 2008 report to the U.S. Congress on teen driving crashes, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration concluded that "driver education is effective at ensuring that novice drivers know the rules of the road, learn basic vehicle control skills, and have been introduced to safety driving information."

The current law KSA 8-267 states that, "Moneys in the state safety fund and in the motorcycle safety fund shall be distributed to provide funds for driver training courses in the schools in Kansas and for the administration of this act, as the legislature shall provide," and has in the past provided state reimbursements for public driver's education as a part of the state safety fund. Previously, it provided reimbursements of \$108 per student who took driver's ed. This year public driver's ed. programs were told they would be provided with only \$38 per student in reimbursements. That funding has now been dropped down to zero.

We must also point out that KSA 8-272 provides that "no moneys in the state safety fund shall be used for any purpose other than that specified in this subsection (i.e. school districts being reimbursed for driver's ed. programs) or for the support of driver improvement programs." As a

Senate Education
2-17-09
Attachment 1

result of the proviso by pulling \$1.7 million out of the state safety fund and pooling it into the general funds, students are indirectly deprived of their previously accessible right to receive driver's ed. at a reduced rate from public programs, such as the ones offered at their high school.

According to the Kansas Department of Transportation, 80% of teenagers have taken driver's ed. course. Of that 80%, 76% took driver's ed. at their high school. 100% of teenagers in the Rural West of Kansas took driver's ed. this way. That is an entire section of the state left without public driver's ed.

Driver's ed. is crucial to a teenager's success as a driver. We understand that the budget is tight. Cuts are necessary, but no parent should have to choose between keeping their teenager safe on the road and the potential savings that could keep their family afloat in this turbulent economy. As teens across Kansas begin their journeys behind the wheel, let's ensure that their first step is a safe one with the affordable, readily-available opportunity to take driver's education.

Submitted respectfully,

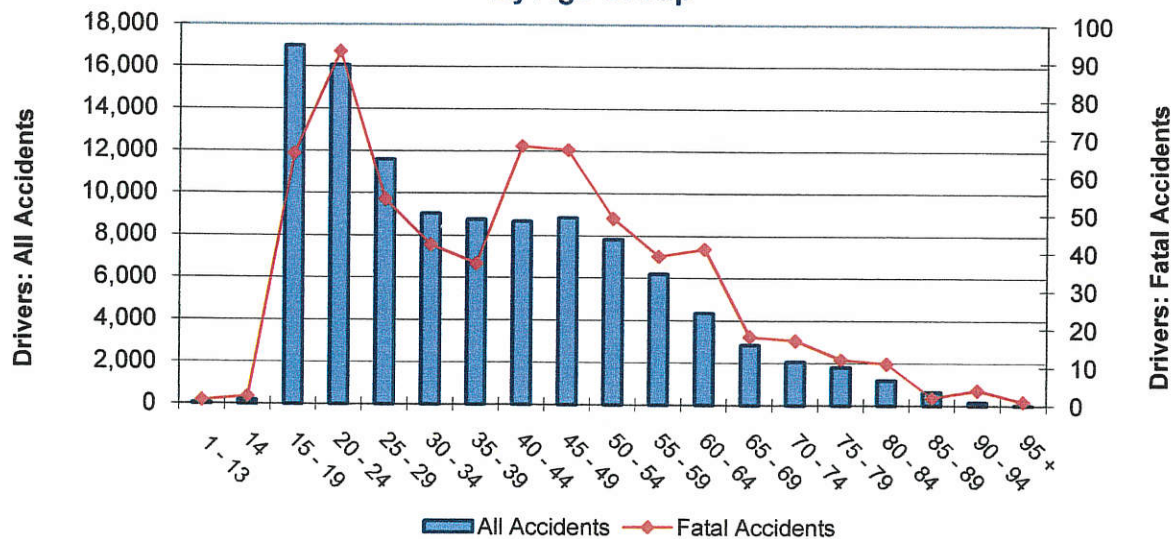
Wichita Mayor's Youth Council

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Driver Age Summary By Age Group

Driver Age	DRIVERS Involved In...			Accidents Per Age Group		
	All Accidents	Fatal Accidents	Injury Accidents	Total	Fatal	Injury
1 - 13	52	1	20	52	1	20
14	188	2	66	188	2	66
15 - 19	16,988	66	4,460	15,485	62	4,105
20 - 24	16,072	93	4,145	15,022	81	3,858
25 - 29	11,586	54	2,983	11,081	50	2,834
30 - 34	9,055	42	2,227	8,707	41	2,143
35 - 39	8,764	37	2,267	8,452	34	2,164
40 - 44	8,676	68	2,090	8,352	61	2,000
45 - 49	8,848	67	2,141	8,542	61	2,051
50 - 54	7,823	49	1,905	7,590	46	1,833
55 - 59	6,181	39	1,524	6,022	35	1,482
60 - 64	4,359	41	1,034	4,271	38	1,014
65 - 69	2,834	18	679	2,787	17	668
70 - 74	2,061	17	506	2,033	17	500
75 - 79	1,795	12	423	1,773	12	421
80 - 84	1,181	11	294	1,166	11	292
85 - 89	622	2	164	620	2	164
90 - 94	161	4	36	161	4	36
95 +	19	1	8	19	1	8
Unknown	4,676	0	594	4,629	0	584
Total	111,941	624	27,566	70,589*	379*	16,228*

**Drivers Involved in Accidents
By Age Group**



* The totals reflect all accidents in Kansas for 2007, not the sum of the cells above, as multiple counting occurs when drivers of different age groups are involved in the same accident.

City Summaries

CITY NAME	Accidents				People				Accidents		
	Total	Fatal	Injury	PDO	Deaths	Injuries	Restraint Use %	Peds*	Deer	Speed-Related	Alcohol-Related
TRIBUNE	6	-	-	6	-	-	66.7	-	-	-	-
TROY	3	-	-	3	-	-	87.5	-	-	-	-
TURON	3	-	1	2	-	1	100.0	-	1	2	-
TYRO	3	-	2	1	-	2	88.9	-	-	2	-
UDALL	4	-	-	4	-	-	100.0	-	-	-	-
ULYSSES	63	-	9	54	-	13	76.9	-	-	1	3
UNIONTOWN	1	-	-	1	-	-	100.0	-	1	-	-
UTICA	1	-	1	-	-	1	-	1	-	-	-
VALLEY CENTER	35	-	9	26	-	10	97.7	-	4	4	-
VALLEY FALLS	9	-	-	9	-	-	66.7	-	-	-	1
VICTORIA	7	-	2	5	-	2	60.0	1	1	2	1
VINING	1	-	-	1	-	-	100.0	-	-	-	-
VIRGIL	1	-	-	1	-	-	0.0	-	-	-	-
WAKEENEY	24	-	1	23	-	3	48.9	-	2	3	2
WAKEFIELD	7	-	-	7	-	-	70.0	-	1	-	-
WALDO	2	-	-	2	-	-	100.0	-	1	-	-
WALNUT	1	-	-	1	-	-	100.0	-	1	-	-
WALTON	5	-	2	3	-	2	100.0	-	-	-	-
WAMEGO	61	-	15	46	-	19	83.7	1	-	1	3
WASHINGTON	18	-	-	18	-	-	57.1	-	-	-	1
WATERVILLE	3	-	1	2	-	1	75.0	-	-	2	-
WATHENA	14	-	1	13	-	1	82.1	-	1	-	2
WAVERLY	5	-	3	2	-	5	53.3	-	-	-	-
WEIR	4	-	1	3	-	4	50.0	-	1	1	-
WELLINGTON	118	-	33	85	-	46	73.8	6	1	2	6
WELLSVILLE	11	-	2	9	-	4	77.3	-	-	1	-
WEST MINERAL	1	-	-	1	-	-	100.0	-	-	-	-
WESTWOOD	15	-	2	13	-	4	90.0	-	-	1	1
WESTWOOD	1	-	1	-	-	1	100.0	-	-	-	-
WETMORE	2	-	-	2	-	-	100.0	-	-	-	-
WHITE CITY	8	-	-	8	-	-	84.6	-	-	-	1
WHITE CLOUD	2	-	1	1	-	1	100.0	-	-	1	-
WHITEWATER	1	-	1	-	-	1	100.0	-	-	-	-
WICHITA	8,989	22	2,945	6,022	23	4,036	90.2	186	49	1,349	538
WILLIAMSBURG	2	-	-	2	-	-	100.0	-	-	-	-
WILSON	4	-	1	3	-	1	88.9	-	-	-	-
WINCHESTER	1	-	-	1	-	-	50.0	-	-	1	-
WINFIELD	303	1	47	255	1	61	84.0	9	10	12	10
WINONA	1	-	-	1	-	-	66.7	-	-	-	-
YATES CENTER	9	-	3	6	-	4	66.7	-	-	-	-
Totals	70,589	379	16,227	53,983	416	22,903	86.2	824	9,417	9,480	3,292

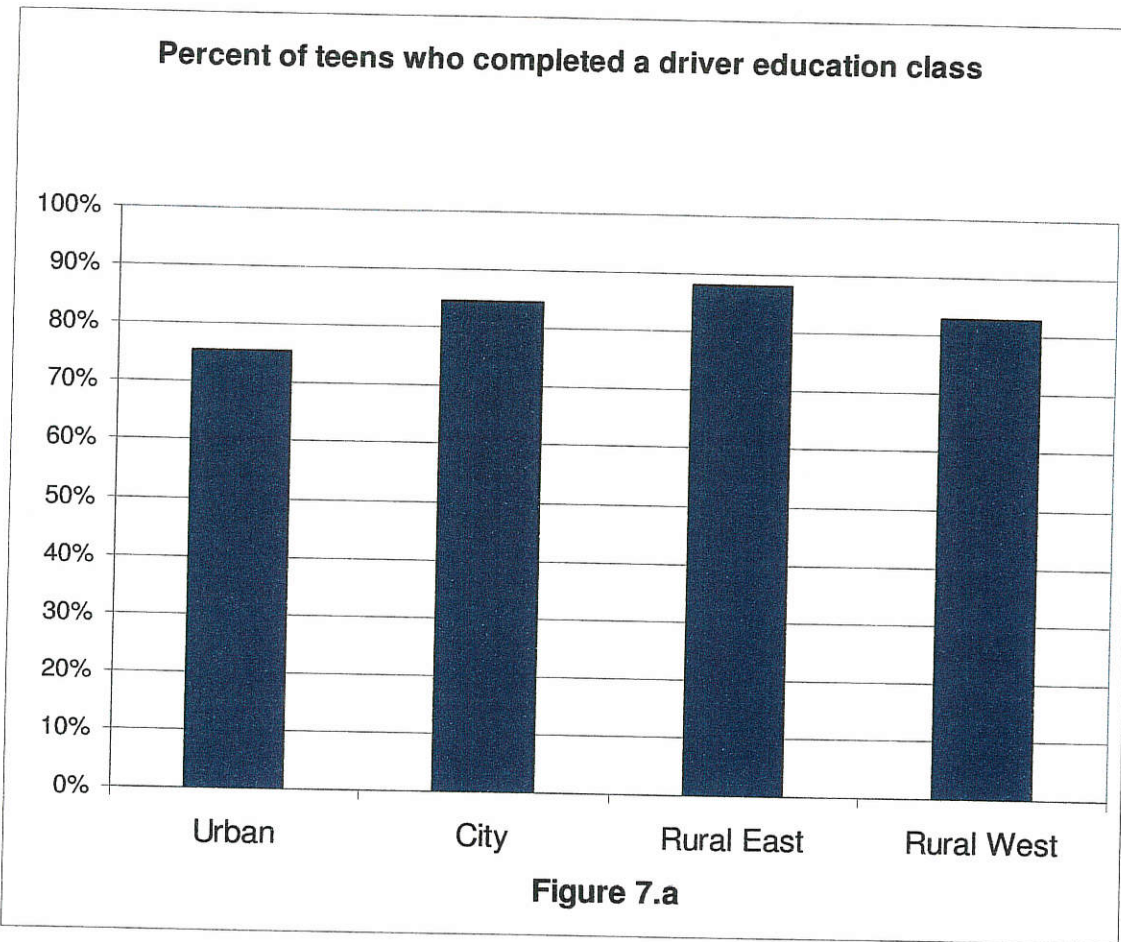


*Pedestrians: pedestrians, pedalcyclists, rider of animal; occupant of a legally parked vehicle, an animal-drawn carriage, or a machine operating for its intended purpose.

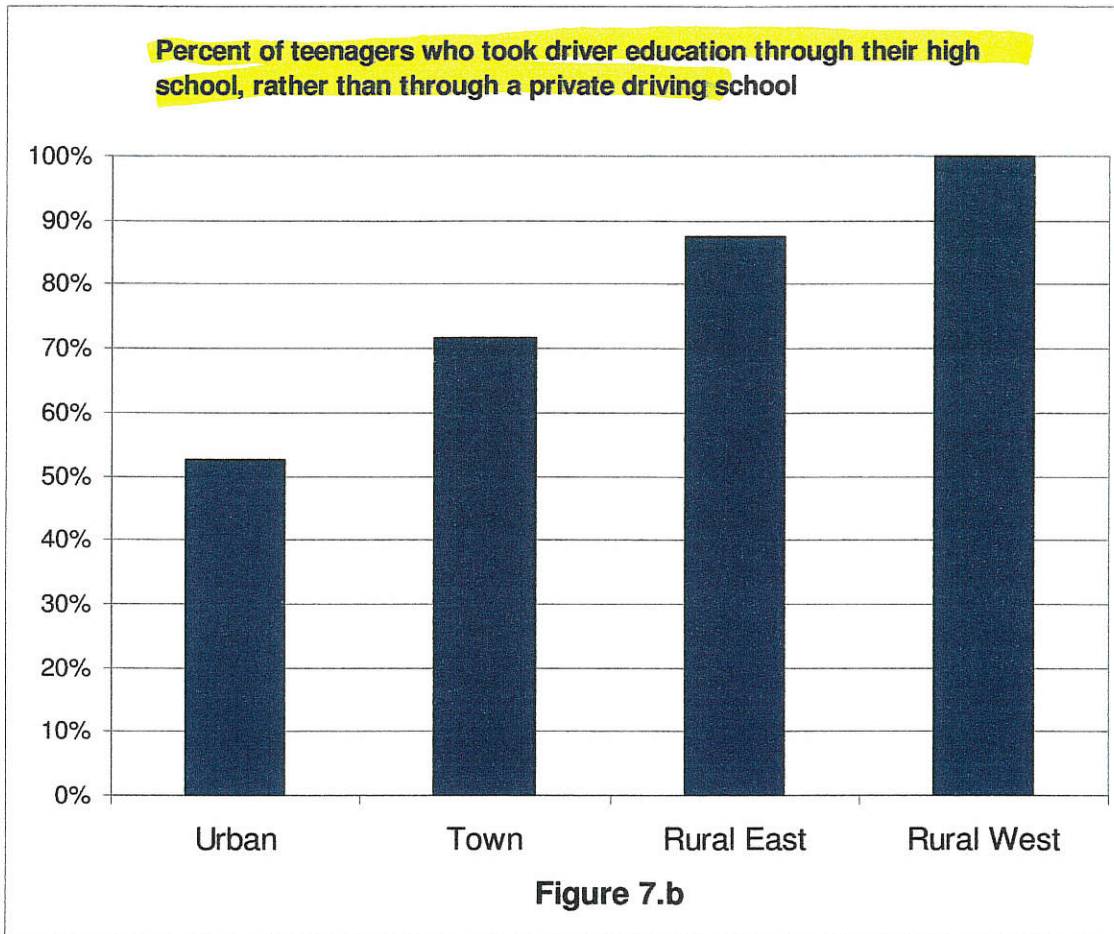
80% of parents reported that their teen had taken a driver education class (Figure 7.a). In 76% of those families, the class was taken through the teens' school system (Figure 7.b).

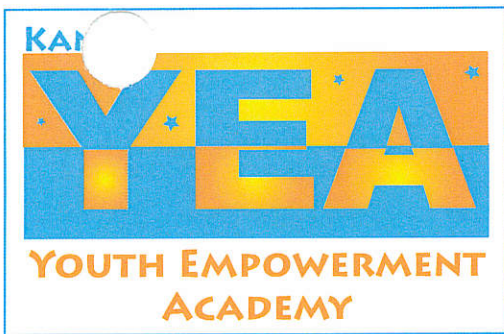
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Among those families where the teen did not take the class through his/her school, 84% indicated that a private class was available within the teens' home community. For those who had to travel to another community to take a driver education class (representing only 4.1% of teens who took driver education), the average estimated distance from the teen's home was about 18 miles.



There are regional differences in the driver education experience. Somewhat fewer teens in the most urban areas completed a driver education class. Among those who did, a substantially greater proportion took the class through a private driving school (Figure 7.b). In the most rural areas, all teens who took a driver education class did it through the school system.





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Testimony for the Senate Education Committee Concerning SB 162

Carrie Greenwood

2-17-09

Good afternoon! Thank you all for allowing me to speak with you today. My name is Carrie Greenwood, and I am the Program Coordinator for the Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy. I am here, along with a couple of other youth, to advocate for the passage of Senate Bill 162. At the Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy, our mission is to empower young people who have disabilities. I cannot think of a better way to empower our young people than to pass this bill and ensure that ALL students in Kansas become aware of differences, diversity, and acceptance.

When our organization opened in 2005, we immediately began focusing much of our efforts on educating the public about disability awareness and history. We knew that to open minds and break down barriers, especially in the school system, we had to go out and speak openly about disability and the culture and pride behind it. In recent years, we have seen a movement towards making this information available all across the U.S. and actually designating weeks to focus on these topics in schools. There are currently 11 states that have passed, or are in the process of creating, a bill similar to SB 162. These bills have been passed because of the passion and dedication of the youth who advocated for them.

We, at KYEA, knew that we had to create such a bill in the state of Kansas. So, in December, we assembled a taskforce of youth who believe in the impact of a bill such as this one and began creating an action plan for what you all now know as Senate Bill 162. Although the youth on this taskforce did not write the actual text of this bill, they have had a direct hand in every single aspect of this process. THEY decided what the bill should focus on; THEY chose the designated weeks stated in the bill; THEY have worked tirelessly for the past few months to gather support for this bill; and THEY have come up with their own testimony, which they will share with you today. This taskforce has worked so hard because they truly believe in this bill and the impact that it can have on our state. They know, firsthand, what it is like to not be understood by their peers. They have seen bullying, they have experienced discrimination, and they also know that a little bit of understanding can go a long way.

At this time, I am going to explain why I am an advocate of SB 162. How would a bill like this have affected me when I was in elementary school and high school? Let me explain a little bit about myself. I was born with my disability and was fairly well accepted by my peers throughout my years of school. I was in mainstream classes, which meant that most of the classmates that I interacted with did not have visible disabilities. While I did feel pretty accepted, I also felt a sense of hesitation and curiosity from many of my classmates. They knew that I used a wheelchair, but most of them did not know any details about my disability. If they would have asked me, I would have openly shared with them and answered their questions, but no one really asked. I believe that they didn't ask because they were afraid and did not know how to ask. I remember one day, when I was in middle school, my teacher actually invited me to share about my disability. I was so excited to finally be invited to talk about that part of myself. I think I

Senate Education

PROMOTING AND SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES IN KANSAS...

*2-17-09
Attachment 2*

knew, even then, that by answering a few questions, I could break down walls that had been built by fear and a lack of understanding. Since then, I have taken every opportunity to educate others about people with disabilities. I feel that awareness is so important, especially in the school system. When people, especially youth, understand why we do things the way we do, and why we look different, or talk different, or learn different, then they are so much more likely to accept us, and treat us as equals, and even hire us in the workforce someday.

The other part of this bill that would have made a huge impact on me, when I was younger, would have been learning about the history and culture of the disability community. These topics are not currently addressed in history classes. The leaders are not mentioned. The treatment long ago is not talked about. The whole disability rights movement is non-existent in current history classes. It was not until I had just graduated from high school that I learned about these things. While I have never been a huge fan of history, learning about those important leaders that paved the way for me and the long road that has gotten us to where we are today, impacted me in a great way. I realized that I am a part of this movement... that I belong to this bigger community of strong, successful, proud people with disabilities. And because I belong to this community, I too can be strong, successful, and proud of who I am. Learning all of this in elementary school would have changed my whole perspective. I would have recognized my disability as a natural part of who I am. I would have had more self-confidence. I would have had role models with disabilities. By passing this bill, we can give all of these things to 100's of youth who are just like me.

The other reason that I truly believe in this bill is that I have already seen the impact that awareness and education can have in schools all across the state. In only three years time, KYEA has been able to educate a total of over 1730 students in 25 schools. We have spoken about the very things that this bill advocates for: disability awareness, disability history, and acceptance of differences. The impact can be clearly seen during and after our presentations. I can count many times when elementary students, who would normally never point out their differences, are proudly declaring that they have a disability. They want to announce it and explain it, and we know, right then and there, that a spark of pride has ignited in them at a very young age. The same happens in high schools. While they are not quite as quick to jump up and announce their disability, we do see a greater sense of pride and a newfound knowledge that if all of these people with disabilities have succeeded, then maybe they can too.

The impact is also seen in the students who do not have disabilities. I have seen light bulb moments in some children where they realize that maybe using hurtful words is not so good after all or that maybe they should stand up for their friends who are different instead of teasing them. High school students are impacted as well. They shy away from what they don't understand. By talking about disability openly, they are able to understand and get their questions answered. All of this leads to increased self-esteem in students with disabilities, as well as better treatment of ALL students.

We do realize that a fiscal note of \$3000 in SGF funds has been attached to this bill. Our original plan, when we decided to advocate for this bill was that there would be no cost attached. We, at KYEA, are fully prepared to assist with curriculum development and pass along curriculum that has already been developed so that this cost is reduced or eliminated altogether.

In closing, I just ask you to think about the impact that this bill can have in schools across our state. I ask you to listen to the testimonies of the other two youth who are here today and then visualize all of the youth who are out there that could be greatly impacted by this bill. Senate Bill 162 means greater awareness, acceptance, and better treatment of students throughout Kansas. It is a plan for a better, more accepting society. My question to you is... will Kansas take a huge step in changing our society today? Thank you.

Testimony to Senate Education Committee on SB 162
Christian Roberson
2-17-09

Did you approximately 51.2 million people live with disabilities?

Disability history however has been largely ignored in curriculum at the elementary, middle and high school levels. As a person wanting to be a top leader of youth led history. I would love to know that I helped Kansas with a landmark legislation that established a Disability Awareness and History Bill.

I know people that have been bullied and made fun of that have disabilities. I have done this myself and feel bad about it. I feel like I owe myself and others students even though I have a disability as well.

I am here to ask the legislature to provide recognition through an annual, joint proclamation; and provide resources for instruction and activities at all level of school including college and universities. As a Kansan with a disability and a youth I want Kansas to be on the leading edge of history, values and beliefs and pass this Disability Awareness and History Bill. If other people knew about the struggles of having a disability starting at the elementary level there would be less bulling and more self confidence in all people with or without a disability.

Please vote for the Disability Awareness and History Bill as it would bring changes not just at school but at home and in the communities for people with disabilities.

It would give pride to people with disabilities who deserve it. My name is Christian Roberson I am from Wichita Kansas I attend Wichita Heights High School. Thank you for your time.

Senate Education
2-17-09
Attachment 3

Testimony to Senate Education Committee on SB 162

Andrew Crane

2-17-09

Members of the Committee, my name is Andrew Crane from Wichita, Kansas. I am here with the KYEA, Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy and I am here to talk to you about Senate Bill No. 162.

This bill is about Disability, Awareness, and History. It will help students who do not have disabilities understand the struggles that students with disabilities go through. Let me share a story with you: In the 9th grade I got pushed and bullied because of my disability. Two students saw what was going on, and they stood up for me, and we became friends. This one event helped me through High School. It empowered me to be brave and get involved with school. I think that this is an example of why this bill is needed. Thank-You for hearing me and please support the passage of this bill.

Senate Education
2-17-09
Attachment 4

Testimony on SB 162
To
Senate Education Committee
By
Anne-Marie Hughey
February 17, 2009

Madam Chair, members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to offer testimony on SB 162 which would designate the last two (2) weeks of January as Disability History and Awareness Weeks, as well as implementing disability history and awareness in the curriculum of the Kansas school districts.

My name is Anne-Marie Hughey and I am the Legislative and Policy Advocate for SKIL Resource Center. I am also a newly elected executive committee member of the Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy (KYEA) board. I have been involved with KYEA since its inception and have seen the significant impact the organization has had on youth with disabilities, educators and family members. I firmly believe that if the state education system implemented the training proposed in this bill, it would provide young people with disabilities with the knowledge that they are not alone, and that a great many individuals with significant disabilities have come before them and paved the way for a more accessible and acceptable society. It would also provide young people without disabilities with a better understanding of disability issues and help remove the stereotypes they may have about people with disabilities.

I believe that once disability history and awareness is taught in our school systems, it will have the same benefits that occurred when students began learning about the civil rights movement, its leaders, and information on some of the most successful and innovative Americans, who also happen to be people of color. The teaching of the civil rights movement, etc., help dispel misconceptions and prejudice just because someone's skin color was different from their own did not mean that they couldn't accomplish great things. It also gave young people of color the knowledge that, if they set goals for themselves and expected that they could achieve anything they put their mind to, they could make it happen.

It is the same with young people with disabilities. Once they are given the information that many people with disabilities have come before them and achieved great things, they too may begin to believe that they can do anything they put their mind to.

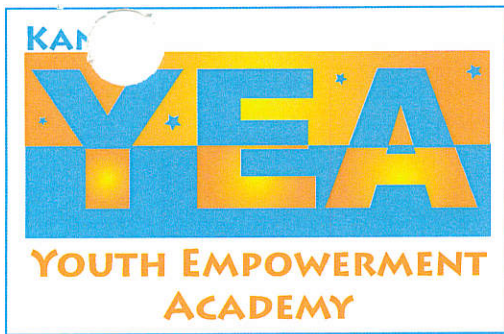
For over 25 years Kansas has been a national leader in promoting the rights of people with disabilities. It is now time to take the next step and become a leader in the education of disability history and awareness, which will result in youth with disabilities, teachers and family members understanding that even though a child has a disability, he or she should have the same expectations for success as a child without a disability.

We understand that the Kansas school systems, as all of us, will be facing many challenges over the next few years. However as a member of the KYEA board, I can confidently say that we will provide the necessary assistance to make this project a success, and we look forward to partnering with KNEA and the State Board of Education to make this project a reality in the Kansas school systems.

Senate Education
2-17-09
Attachment 5

Finally, less than a month ago America celebrated the changing face of America by electing the first black man as President of the United States. Some day our children and/or grandchildren will celebrate the election of a President who is also a person with a disability. A President who will not have to hide that she or he has a disability as did FDR, who even though he had a disability, was one of America's greatest Presidents.

Thank you in advance for your consideration. I will stand for any questions.



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To: Education Committee
From: Julia Fonseca, KYEA Executive Director
Date: February 17, 2009
Subject: SB 162

Dear Education Committee:

I would like to thank you for taking the time to listen to testimony today both written and oral about SB 162. The youth that are giving testimony today have worked extremely hard on their testimony and passage of this bill since December 2008. As the Executive Director for the Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy, I have been working closely with the youth as they drive this initiative to teach disability awareness and history in Kansas schools. I have many reasons to support this bill personally and professionally. I will share my professional reasons first.

Throughout my years working with youth with disabilities, I have seen first hand how disability history and awareness knowledge can change a life. With the help of my staff, I have been presenting material on this topic for the past three years. The original intent of presenting this material, three years ago, was to educate and empower youth with disabilities in the special education classroom. Since the beginning, there has been a growing demand from principals, teachers, etc, to spread this knowledge school wide. With this opportunity, we have had many youth approach us on "how cool" it was to hear this information or they say, "my relative, friend, neighbor has a disability" or "I have a disability." Most of all, we have heard reaction from instructors about how they have seen a change in their students once this information on THEIR history was shared with them. With this knowledge that we share, power begins to grow... power to spring them into, not only thinking about their future, but taking active steps towards that future. Empowerment brings about belief in one's self. Belief in one's abilities to move on to higher education. Belief in one's self to work. Belief in one's self to step off of the social security rolls and generate their own income. Disability or not, none of us would know how to make decisions for the future if it were not for the decisions of the past.

Personally, I have felt a direct impact with learning about my disability history and being aware of my own strengths and the strengths of others. In 2002, I attended a program currently offered by the Kansas Youth Empowerment Academy. I was twenty-three at the time and this was truly the very first time that I had heard such words as "disability heritage." I not only learned about when the movement started, how it started, and who led it, but, most of all, that it is continuing as we speak! Up until that point in my life, I wanted NOTHING to do with "THOSE" people. When disability history and awareness

*Senate Education
2-17-09
Attachment 6*

Through this bill, we are asking that the state recognize the importance of this information and that schools take the initiative with us to actively spread this information to their students. When KYEA youth first put this bill together, there was absolutely no fiscal note. It has been brought to our attention that a fiscal note has been added without KYEA's knowledge. Please know that our intent was, and is, to provide the resources to schools through presentations, to connect them to organizations in their area that have knowledge on disability awareness and history, and to provide an established KYEA curriculum. It is our full intent to share with the schools our knowledge so that they may pass it on to their students without reinventing the wheel.

It is time for Kansas to take a firm stand on the support of, not only our adults with disabilities, but our youth who will be adults. The same youth with disabilities that will some day make history.

Thank you for your time, and if you have any questions, please feel free to contact me using the above contact information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Julia Fonseca". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Julia Fonseca
Executive Director



Making public schools great for every child

KANSAS NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION / 715 SW 10TH AVENUE / TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612-1686

Mark Desetti, Testimony
Senate Education Committee
February 17, 2009

Senate Bill 162

Madame Chair, members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to come before you today to discuss **Senate Bill 162**. I would note that today I represent both KNEA and the Kansas Association of School Boards.

Frankly, I was a little surprised to see this bill. I would like to put a little perspective on disability awareness into the discussion.

Those of us who graduated from high school in the early seventies probably had very little interaction with persons with disabilities. For my own part, in my high school I can only remember seeing students with disabilities when they appeared at lunch time to work in the cafeteria. What happened to them the rest of the day, I can't say. That was a general reality back before Congress passed the first special education law in the mid-seventies.

With passage of PL 94-142, students with disabilities were brought into our schools. Granted they were often in segregated settings, but they were no longer hidden. Into the eighties and nineties, as student placements were challenged and the law was reauthorized as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act or IDEA, we went from segregated classrooms to mainstreaming to inclusion. My own children who now range in age from 16 to 25 have never known classrooms in which children with disabilities were not fully integrated.

My children all had as classmates and friends children with a range of disabilities – from relatively mild learning disabilities to severe multiple handicaps that include children who were wheelchair bound and required medical services throughout the day. My three sons have known and been in class with children who have passed away during the school year due to complications from their disabilities.

My daughter participated in her elementary school's "Circle of Friends" program under which general education students are paired with children with autism to provide friends and playmates.

In addition to this progress in including children with disabilities in our classrooms and school programs, schools have established anti-bullying programs and character education programs to help our students become more aware of those around them.

I believe that our children today are not unaware of those with disabilities. We would be better served to institute a disabilities awareness program in our work places so we adults could better match the behavior of our children.

I find it ironic that we are hearing a bill to create two "disabilities awareness weeks" less than a week after both the Kansas House and Senate voted to cut funding for students with disabilities by \$4.5 million. Now we propose spending \$3,000 to create a program to tell our schools how to make our students more aware of their disabled peers.

Senate Education
2-17-09
Attachment 7
Web Page: www.knea.org