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**HB 2224 - Written Opponent Testimony**  
**House Education Committee**  
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Dear Chairman and Members of the House Education Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony. As a lifelong educator and President of the American Federation of Teachers - Kansas, I stand before you today in opposition to House Bill 2224 which proposes increasing the number of school days and hours that must be provided by school districts each school year. This bill is flawed and will be detrimental to Kansas working families.

If the bill hopes to improve academic outcomes for students through longer school days and years, this argument is based on the misconception of false cause, as there is no strong evidence to suggest that simply increasing the amount of time spent in school will automatically lead to better academic performance. In fact, studies have shown that quality, not quantity, is the key to improving educational outcomes. By ignoring this fact, we are straining resources and risking burnout for both students, teachers and families across the state.

Research has shown that there is no consistent relationship between the length of the school day or year and academic achievement. A study by Grand Canyon University points out three key factors.

First, longer days added to a school calendar does not ensure higher academic achievement. There are some studies that show longer instruction time can have an impact on achievement, but those results depend more on things like classroom environment, quality of instruction, student prior knowledge and ability. This means that a longer day does not automatically correlate with higher achievement. Without other factors in place, a longer school day is most likely not increasing student learning. In fact, countries that are regularly high achieving such as Finland, Singapore and China have not taken the longer day approach. Instead, they maximize learning within the traditional schedule.

Second, the study points out this type of legislation will lead to higher educational costs. In order to lengthen the school day, the school budget needs to be much higher. Teacher salaries would need to reflect the increase in time that it takes not only to deliver up to two hours extra of class work but also to plan and prepare for it. In addition, lights, air conditioning and heating units in school facilities will run

for longer hours. There may be other places where schools could find efficiencies but simply making the school day a few hours longer would be costly.

The last point is less time for other activities. Students would be spending most of their waking hours at school if the school day was extended. They are already there for six and a half hours of their time. On top of that, they probably have around an hour or so of homework each night. Students who participate in extracurricular activities do so because they enrich their lives and build their talents. Lengthening the school day would mean that students need to forgo these extra activities to go to school and complete their homework.

The idea of longer school days got a boost in 2013 with a joint program between NCTL, the U.S. Department of Education and the Ford Foundation called the "Time Collaborative." This three-year initiative involved 40 schools in the states of Colorado, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Tennessee. Outside of major projects like this, more school districts across the country are also stretching the school day, although in less ambitious ways. But the shift to longer school days comes with pitfalls and unmet expectations. Even those educators who are in schools that have successfully implemented ELT initiatives will be the first to issue a warning - a longer school day is not for everyone.

Moreover, longer school days and years can have negative consequences for students, such as increased stress and burnout. This is especially true for students from low-income families, who may have additional responsibilities outside of school, such as caring for younger siblings or working part-time jobs to help support their families.

In conclusion, the lack of empirical evidence supporting longer school days and years, combined with the negative consequences for students and families, should be cause for concern. We need to focus on evidence-based policies that prioritize quality education and support working families, rather than blindly pushing for more instructional time.

This bill will have negative consequences for working families, lead to teacher stress and burn out, increase educational costs and make it more difficult for students to engage in extracurricular activities. I urge this committee to not move forward with this legislation.

Thank you.

**AFT-Kansas**

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