



## Making public schools great for every child

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

Mark Desetti, Testimony  
House Education Committee  
February 12, 2013  
House Bill 2222

Madame Chair, members of the Committee, while KNEA supports efforts to combat bullying in our schools we rise with some questions about the effectiveness of HB 2222.

I cannot say with certainty whether or not we support this bill because we would like the committee to consider whether or not this bill actually improves the bullying statute or, as an unintended consequence, limits it.

Under the changes to the statute proposed in HB 2222, we would note that while it may appear to be broadening the definition of bullying to include staff member against student and student against staff member, we believe that this change may actually be more limiting.

Under current law, without this specificity, we believe that bullying includes student to student, student to staff, staff to student, staff to staff, and patron to staff. It would appear that the last two incidents would no longer be actionable under the proposed bill.

If we wish to stop bullying, we need to include all instances. Situations exist where a supervisor bullies an employee and where a parent bullies a coach. These situations are also deserving of examination.

I believe the intent of the proponents was to be sure to include staff to student and student to staff bullying. But I think the approach in this bill might actually eliminate the need to report other kinds of bullying.

We would further urge all to keep an eye on the possibility under any such provision for an individual to levy false charges as retribution for other acts. For example, there have been instances where false charges were brought against school staff members in retaliation for low grades.