



Garry Sigle Testimony
Kansas Association of American Educators (KANAAE)
Senate Education Committee
March 13, 2013
House Bill 2221

Mister Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is Garry Sigle. I am appearing before you today to testify in support of House Bill 2221 as the executive director of the Kansas Association of American Educators (KANAAE). My perspective also includes 33 years experience as a Kansas public school teacher and coach.

The Kansas Association of American Educators, or KANAAE, is a non-union professional teachers association. We provide a variety of benefits and services to educators including legal and liability coverage. Prior to becoming the executive director I was a member of KANAAE for the final 14 years of my teaching/coaching career at Riley County High School, Riley, Kansas. The first 19 years of my career I was a member of the union. I believe I bring a unique perspective to this committee concerning HB2221.

I'll give you three practical reasons to support this legislation. First, without equal access teachers are under-informed and under-protected. We at KANAAE believe that every educator should obtain affordable liability coverage beyond what their district provides in order to protect themselves in case of a lawsuit. A good educator can see his or her career ended by a frivolous allegation because they were counting on someone else to protect them rather than securing their own insurance. Many teachers know they need this protection, but what they don't know is they don't need to join the union to get it. They don't know that current law forbids them from finding out at school about any other option because the union enjoys exclusive access to meeting space, bulletin boards, mailboxes and email. Educators who don't want to join the union because they don't agree with the politics or the cost are left unprotected. One of my primary roles as executive director of KANAAE is to let all Kansas teachers know they have a non-union, non-political and more affordable option. Member dues for KANAAE are only \$15 per month, which is one-third the cost of the union. Under current law KANAAE does not have access to teacher events like new teacher orientations or district in-services. Without equal access teachers are left in the dark, aware of only one option.

I have two examples to illustrate this point. First, a KANAAE member invited me to her school to meet with two of her colleagues after classes ended for the day. After meeting with the two educators both wanted to join but needed to get out of the union first. Unbelievably, once the two educators contacted the union to close their memberships, my KANAAE member was subjected to intimidation by her school union leaders and harassed into thinking her job was in jeopardy simply because she let me into the building. Passing HB2221 would end this type of harassment and intimidation of Kansas educators who simply want the freedom to share their professional association with their colleagues and want the freedom to join the professional association of their choosing. Teachers wouldn't have to set up secret

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Attachment 2

meetings in their school and they could inspect – or ignore – a brochure in their mailbox or on their bulletin board. In my second example I had contacted a superintendent and asked if I could come to his district to meet with his faculty during an in-service. He agreed but, a few days prior to the appointment, called to indicate the school union leaders objected to the meeting and he had to cancel my appointment. Again, with HB2221 this situation would not be a problem and the educators not in the union could hear of their options.

This example leads me to my second point. HB2221 solves the problem of administrators being forced to serve as referee between professional associations and teachers. On August 22, 2011, I had an appointment with a superintendent friend of mine. I wanted to introduce KANA AE to his staff. His comment to me was “why would I want to allow you to speak to my district teachers when I know that would create a conflict with the teachers I have to negotiate with?” meaning the union. I asked my friend what percentage of his teachers were members of the union. His response was 35-40%. So, I asked to speak to the other 60%. He said he was sorry; he couldn’t let me speak to any of them. He knew that current law prevents teachers from hearing about their options – even if they are not a member of any association. He wasn’t concerned about a disruption to his school. He was concerned about how the union would react. Passing HB2221 would eliminate putting any administrator in that position. I have also been working to grow our student membership by reaching out to pre-service teachers at the state universities in Kansas. One university indicated that they had a student union organization and didn’t have time in their schedule, nor did they see the need, to allow me to speak. My response was to say that I didn’t think it was their responsibility to limit the information the students on their campus received. I suggested it was their responsibility as educators to give the students all the information available so the students could make an informed decision that best fit what they believed. I have yet to be allowed to speak to that university’s pre-service teachers.

My third and final point is this...current law apparently doesn’t even allow an educator to share his or her professional organization with colleagues. I received an unsolicited email on February 8, 2013 from a KANA AE member named Tamara. She has given me permission to provide her email to this committee and it is included with my testimony. In summary she told me that in August she placed a small three-fold KANA AE brochure on a school bulletin board to let her colleagues know about her professional association. On February 7 a colleague came to her and shared that the building union rep was taking pictures of the brochure on the bulletin board. Tamara then sent an email to the union rep saying she’d be happy to answer any questions she had concerning KANA AE. The next day the principal informed Tamara the information needed to be taken down. She was shocked to find out that this was a violation of the negotiated agreement. At the end of her email she asks a simple question....”why is this in the negotiated agreement?”

In conclusion let me say that one professional teachers association will never serve every educator in Kansas. HB2221 treats educators across Kansas as the professionals they are and would allow them to hear of their choices in professional membership. It is for this reason I encourage you to support HB2221.

Garry Sigle, Executive Director
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Garry Sigle

From: Tamara Krumm [tkrumm@cox.net]
Sent: Friday, February 08, 2013 10:41 PM
To: info@kanaae.org
Subject: Teacher's lounge issue with posting KANNAE materials
Attachments: NEA Email.jpg

Hello,

I thought I would share with you a situation that happened at my school in the last couple of days. My husband spoke with you on the phone today regarding this situation. Thought you would be interested in the details.

In August, I placed a 8 ½ x 11 KANAAE poster in the teacher's lounge of my school along with a few copies of the enrollment form and a 4 x 8 sheet that had the websites to AAETEACHERS.ORG and KANAAE.ORG or "find on Facebook". The display was on a corner of a bulletin board. Very simple.

February 7, a fellow teacher came and shared with me that our building NEA representative, who also holds a position at the district level and I believe at the state level, was taking pictures of this small display. I emailed her and stated that if she needed more information I would be happy assist her. She did not reply.

February 8, my principal shared with me the attached email. The material was taken down. I was shocked to learn that this was a violation of the negotiated agreement! Our agreement was signed at the beginning of the school year. I find it interesting that all this happened today. The NEA representative stated that she had not seen the materials hanging on the bulletin board. I am at fault to an extent, I should be more familiar with the negotiated agreement. But, why was there such a need for a reaction to a simple poster?

This whole situation leaves me frustrated, amazed and full of questions. How and Why is all this possible? Who chose KNEA to have such power that they can direct what happens at my school? Shouldn't teachers have a choice in the association or organization or union that they are involved with? If a teacher wants to end their membership in KNEA why must they jump through hoops to do it? Why is this in the negotiated agreement?

Most teachers are very hard working individuals, who are in the profession to help children, families and our world. They make millions of decisions daily. Shouldn't they also have the ability to choose the association or organization or union that meets their needs regarding work environment, insurance, etc.?

Thank you for the work you are doing. Please let our state representative know that the hard working teachers in Kansas need the ability to make choices.

Sincerely,
Tamara Krumm
3709 Plymouth Circle
Manhattan, KS 66503

Steffens, Luverne

From: Voth, Amanda
Sent: Thursday, February 07, 2013 3:46 PM
To: Steffens, Luverne
Subject: FW:

Begin forwarded message:

From: "Belt, Kevin [KS]" <kevin.belt@knea.org>
Date: February 7, 2013, 12:03:55 PM CST
To: Amanda Voth <mandavoth@icloud.com>
Subject: RE:

You need to remind your principal that KANAAE is a "Professional Employees Organization" which is the opinion of the Kansas Supreme Court and they should not be allowed to leave literature in the school building in accordance with the negotiated agreement the section on Association Rights.

Plus, pick up all the literature when you see it and throw it away outside the building.

Remind people if KANNAE is mentioned, that organization supports all of these anti-teacher/public education bills. Tell them that Garry Sigle gave written testimony on behalf of KANAAE to support HB 2023. He also personally testified in favor of a similar bill last year.

Kevin J. Belt
Konza UniServ Director
KNEA
715 SW 10th Avenue
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1686
785-232-8271 ext. 118
Fax: 785-232-6012

-----Original Message-----

From: Amanda Voth [<mailto:mandavoth@icloud.com>]
Sent: Thursday, February 07, 2013 11:53 AM
To: Belt, Kevin [KS]
Subject: Re:

She said to contact you. Should I just let my principal and/or the staff mrmber know that its a violation?

Sent from my iPhone

On Feb 7, 2013, at 11:19 AM, "Belt, Kevin [KS]" <kevin.belt@knea.org> wrote:

I hope you picked all of them up. You need to let Sarah know this would be a violation of the negotiated agreement having this literature in the lounge.