



Kansas County & District Attorneys Association

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Representative Ron Highland, Chairman
Committee on Education
Statehouse, Room 112-N
Topeka, KS 66612

Re: SB 70

Chairman Ron Highland and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit our written response in regards to SB 70. The KCDA is in support of SB 70.

The passage of SB 70 would amend K.S.A. 72-1397 and 72-1923 to require teachers who have been convicted of certain criminal offenses to file a report with the State Board of Education disclosing the conviction. The failure to file such a report would be a class B misdemeanor.

This is an important amendment which would help ensure that the individuals trusted with our children's education do not have criminal records. If a teacher is convicted of a criminal offense in another state, there is currently no mechanism whereby a school district could learn of the existence of the conviction. SB 70 provides such a mechanism by placing the impetus of disclosing the conviction on the teacher. This method is similar to the responsibilities of other licensed professionals.

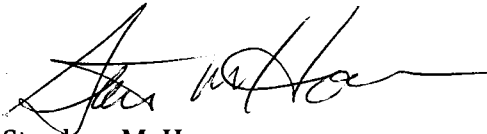
Current law requires the county or district attorney to file a report with the Board of Education on those individuals who have a teaching license and have been convicted of the statutory listed crimes. Many times whether someone has a teaching license is not relevant to the crime charged, thus, county or district attorneys have no way of knowing which defendants to report to the Board of Education.

Under current law, there is no incentive for a teacher to disclose a criminal conviction to his or her employers. The passage of SB 70 would provide an incentive to disclose the conviction by making the failure to disclose a criminal act.

A person who has been convicted of any of the offenses listed in K.S.A. 72-1397 would certainly be unfit to be trusted with our children's care and education. Our children's safety and well-being requires us to do our utmost to ensure that persons with serious criminal convictions are not placed in such a position of trust. I believe SB 70 would help further that goal.

The KCDAAB supports this change in KSA 72-1397. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 70.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Stephen M. Howe", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Stephen M. Howe
Johnson County District Attorney
KCDAAB Board Member
P.O. Box 728
Olathe, KS 66051