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MARK HUTTON
105TH DISTRICT

Representative Mark Hutton, District 105 Testimony in Support of Substitute for HB 2601

Chairman Proehl and members of the committee. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify in support of a substitute for HB 2601.

Around 2am on March 23rd, 2011, Kyle Thornburg, age 22 and Kylie Jobe, age 20, were 5 miles East of Wilson driving East on I70 returning from a family ski trip in Colorado. They were unaware that only minutes away another driver, later found to have a blood alcohol level almost 3 times the legal limit, had entered the East bound lane driving West in the wrong direction. The collision happened so quickly that neither driver had the time to hit their brakes. The fiery collision that occurred that night destroyed much more than the car they were driving. It snuffed out two young lives, erasing the history they would make, and left four stunned and grieving parents living a nightmare and searching for that ever illusive answer to "Why?"

Shortly after the tragedy the parents started an event call Run2Believe and since its inception, they have raised over \$50,000. Proceeds from this run go to help raise awareness in local high schools about drinking and driving and to support scholarships through the Kyle Thornburg Memorial Fund at the Maize Education Foundation and the Kylie Jobe Endowment at the Oklahoma State University Foundation. In total they have given away eight scholarships in the last four years.

The Maize Education Foundation gives away two scholarships each year – one to a student pursuing art/graphic art and one to a soccer athlete and the OSU Foundation gives away one scholarship each year – specifically for a sophomore Gamma Phi Beta with extra consideration to someone who is from Kansas.

Also, for the past four years, proceeds from the Run2Believe have helped enhance After Prom events and provided alcohol awareness programs at Maize High and Maize South High Schools. They have hosted speakers to talk with high school students about the dangers of drinking and driving and to encourage them to make smart decisions – especially during prom and graduation seasons.

The Substitute for HB2601 creates the DUI Memorial Program that is designed to increase public awareness of the impact drunk driving has on the innocent citizens of Kansas. This program would place a sign along the roadway in the location of a fatality caused by a drunk driver. It requires the agreement of the family and the family will pay for the sign. The initial sign fee would cover the cost of the sign and maintenance for the first 10 years. After that the family would have to renew for another 10-year term.

This bill also asks KDOT to develop a logo specific to drunk driving that would be placed on each of these signs. This logo would be licensed by KDOT for authorized use by groups supporting the efforts to eliminate drunk driving and would be protected by copyright. Currently the federal guidelines do not allow a logo such as this on a sign but I have spoken to Secretary King and he has indicated his support for making a national case for this idea.

KDOT reports that there were 1,957 fatalities on Kansas roads from 2010 thru 2014. Impaired driving or drunk driving accounted for 750 of those fatalities. That's 38% of all deaths and that number does not begin to represent the damage done to the families and friends of these victims. It is an unacceptable number from my perspective and we need to continue to work as diligently as we can to eliminate it.

Thank you Chairman Proehl and Committee members for your attention today and I hope you will join me in supporting this Substitute for HB 2601.