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GREG SMITH

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 323 – The Jason Flatt Act

Chairman Abrams, Vice Chairman Arpke, Ranking Minority Hensley, and members of the House Education Committee, thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify in favor of SB 323.

The hardest thing I have ever had to hear was the news that my child had died. The hardest thing I have ever done is to live every day since that moment. Losing a child is like losing your soul. Regardless of how that happens, unless you have experienced it you have no idea what it feels like or what it does to you. I don't want you to have to know that feeling and this bill can provide resources to help make sure you and other parents don't.

Cathy Housh knows this pain. Joe Karlin knows this pain. Both have lost a child to suicide but I will let them tell you their stories.

The Jason Flatt Act is legislation that requires teachers and certain school personnel to complete two hours of youth suicide awareness and prevention training in order to maintain or renew their licensing credentials. The requirement for this training does not add additional hours of training, but rather falls within the number of hours already required to continue the professional teaching license. Sixteen states have taken the initiative to be proactive in preventing youth suicide by passing The Jason Flatt Act.

The bill was brought to me by Cathy Housh. I had the bill drafted after meeting with Cathy and it was introduced in the Senate Corrections and Juvenile Justice Committee the first week of session this year. After speaking with others I would like to see an amendment added to the bill that instructs the Kansas Board of Education to make the training a requirement to maintain or renew licensure.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Senator Greg Smith, District 21

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