

February 11, 2020

Chairman Huebert, Vice Chair Dietrich, and the House Education Committee,

I am a practicing pediatrician in Lawrence, Kansas, and in our practice we care for patients from the time of birth through 21 years of age, sometimes even older. As a pediatrician I work every day to keep children safe from preventable illnesses so they can grow up to reach their full potential. With this in mind I am opposing HB 2601 that will limit critical public health expertise in the decisions of public health matters.

I strongly believe decisions to make changes to immunization requirements should continue to be the responsibility of the experts at the Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE). They are the ones who weigh the scientific evidence to determine necessary changes to immunization requirements. HB 2601 places responsibility for determining school and day care immunization requirements with the state legislature, which would politicize the issue of immunizations. By interfering with this statute, we are unintentionally giving a platform to misinformation about vaccines. Vaccines are safe and effective - immunizations have led to significant decrease and eradication of many infectious diseases such as polio, measles, mumps, pertussis, meningitis, to name a few. These immunization requirements protect students, their families, and communities from serious, potentially fatal diseases. Please do not vote to limit the ability of public health officials to act in a timely manner.

I strongly but respectfully request you vote no when this bill is considered in the House Education Committee.

Respectfully,

Malana Kuiper, MD