



## *Kansas Association of the Deaf, Inc.*

P.O. Box 10085  
Olathe, KS 66061

**To:** House Committee on Education

**From:** Kim Anderson  
President

**Date:** February 15, 2022

**Subject:** HB 2621; prohibiting dismissal or transfer out of the state school for the deaf

The Kansas Association of the Deaf (KAD) looks forward to discussing the implications of HB 2621 in its current form if it passes. The KAD would like to offer the following comments regarding HB 2621.

Since 1909, the KAD has been working to protect, preserve, and promote the civil, human, and linguistic rights of the Deaf\*, including the Hard of Hearing, Late-Deafened, and DeafBlind individuals in Kansas. The KAD represents approximately 242,000 Kansans who are Deaf individuals-- at least fifteen percent of the entire Kansas population.

As a result of the Deaf community's diverse ways of accessing and using any living, breathing language with the world, each member of the Deaf community has a unique, but similar journey. There are members who learn sign language, while others do not. There are members who do not hear, and there are others who hear but are self-identifying as either Deaf or Hard of Hearing. Those who journey through life with such diverse identities and experiences converge into our community. The wellbeing and health of our community and its members are inextricably linked to cultural collectivism, which is intuitively seen as the heart and soul of the Deaf community.

Hence, we embrace Deaf Kansans' beautiful, unique journeys through everyday life within our community. The love we have for our incredible and remarkable community motivates us to support those who lead us to remove barriers. It does not matter how big or small the barriers are.

The Kansas Deaf community relies on the Kansas Commission for Deaf and Hard of Hearing, a state agency legislatively created in 1982 for the purpose of assisting the state to serve the Kansas Deaf community, to improve the quality of life for Deaf people. This state agency facilitates equal and equitable opportunities for Deaf members to take part in, obtain, and benefit from governmental services available to the general public across Kansas, including public education.

Therefore, the KAD respectfully requests the state legislature to defer to the Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, as intended by the state legislature in 1982, to investigate methodically and in detail the potential harm that HB 2621 in its current form may have on the Deaf students statewide and at the Kansas School for the Deaf, such as the potential misuse or depletion of the limited resources available to Deaf students in Kansas. To move forward with HB 2621 safely and responsibly, it is crucial to collect, analyze, and present data in a collaborative effort with the KAD and stakeholders.

In closing, we strongly urge that the legislators work closely with the Kansas Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. This will ensure legislators craft legislation that eliminates the potential harms of HB 2621 in its current form.



Kim Anderson, President  
Kansas Association of the Deaf

\*Deaf includes all individuals who share similar experiences and realities throughout their life journey.