

Testimony before House Health & Human Services Committee
HB 2453 – Dentist & Hygienist Compact
Mike O’Neal on behalf of the Association of Dental Support Organizations (ADSO)
Informational hearing testimony

March 15, 2023

Chairwoman Landwehr and members of the Committee

Thank you for the opportunity to appear and provide background for HB 2453, the Dentist & Hygienist Compact. I represent ADSO, the Association of Dental Support organizations. ADSO is a national association that supports its member dental support organizations to provide business and operational support services to dentists and dental clinics so that they can focus on patient care and expand access to quality dental care. DSO’s register with the Kansas Dental Board as dental office administrative services providers. Think of them as providing a broad array of non-clinical dental office support, including access to state-of-the-art equipment, continuing educational offerings, peer-to-peer networking, HR, compliance assistance, billing and insurance, etc. Dentists enjoy the services of DSOs because it allows them to spend more of their time practicing their profession.

ADSO has a particular focus on access to dental care and removing statutory and regulatory barriers to dental care access. Unfortunately, access to dental care is lacking in too many states – particularly in economically disadvantaged and rural areas. This is particularly true in Kansas, which is in the bottom quartile nationally: 39th, according to RTI (Research Triangle Institute) data. We currently have 24 counties that are underserved as defined by the Health Resources and Services Administration measure of 5,000 patients to 1 dentist ratio. Nine of those counties are in the eastern half of the state and three border Topeka.

Speaking of Topeka, the city has experienced a double digit (19%) decline in the number of dental offices over a recent 10-year period (2011-2021, according to RTI data).

ADSO has been one of the organizations, in addition to the American Dental Association and the American Dental Hygiene Association that has been involved with the Council of State Government's efforts to address the issue of access to care. The DDH Compact is a project funded by the Department of Defense (DoD) as it also assists military families on the move. We have with us today by WebEx, Matt Shafer with CSG who has graciously made himself available to us to provide an overview of their Dentist and Hygienist Compact, which we had introduced as HB 2453.

I have attached a 2-pager put together by CSG's National Center for Interstate Compacts that provides a handy summary.

In visiting with Kevin Robertson with the Kansas Dental Association and Travis Lowe, representing the Kansas Dental Hygienists Association, it was shared that these organizations are very interested in the Compact but want additional time for their respective organizations to review and learn more about the Compact's provisions. Accordingly, we have agreed to put off a formal hearing and action on the Compact this session and, instead, brief the Committee on the bill by way of an informational hearing.

As Matt Shafer's written testimony indicates, the Compact is similar in form and function to the six occupational licensing compacts that Kansas is already a member of. They are medicine, nursing, psychology, physical therapy, EMS, and audiology-speech language pathology.

I'm happy to stand for questions but probably the best source for answers today will be Matt with CSG. Thanks, again.