

**Written PROPONENT testimony for HB 2669 AN ACT** Codifying the mental health intervention team program administered by the Kansas department for aging and disability services in state statute.

To: Madam Chair Representative Landwehr and committee members

From: Hannah Schartz - All Saints Catholic School – Children First: CEO Kansas Inc.

Date: February 8, 2024

Madam Chair Landwehr and members of the committee,

My name is Hannah Schartz and I am a Social Services Specialist at All Saints Catholic School in Wichita, KS. I provide mental health services, basic needs, peer support and advocacy to students ranging from Pre-K to 8<sup>th</sup> grade. Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony as a PROPONENT to bill HB 2669.

An 8<sup>th</sup> grader who attends All Saints, had a tragedy happen to his family and home. This student and his family suffered a house fire, losing a good majority of their belongings, memorabilia, and necessities. He and his family, which consists of his mother, father, sister, and several dogs, had to move into a small camper, while their house got repaired. Another setback is his mother has several health problems, causing her to undergo several surgeries, and be unable to work.

As one can imagine, these events took a toll on this student's mental health, grades, personal hygiene, and stability. He was not getting sufficient rest at night due to not sleeping comfortably on a normal mattress. Fortunately, this student has an (EANS-funded) social service specialist who provides him with professional assistance and support to help him stay focused as best as possible in school and helps him navigate the current tragic changes of his life. They also provide basic needs and hygiene care for this family to support them.

This student has also had issues with being bullied at school by his peers. The social services specialist offers him support, resources and coping mechanisms regarding bullying, as well as holds mediations when necessary to prevent bullying. Consistent support sessions allow this student to navigate school, home life, and the mental toll that this young individual has had to endure.

Overall, it is important to highlight the advocacy that EANS funded specialists provide to not only Catholic students, but Catholic families in need.

Thank you, Madam Chair and members of the committee, for allowing me to provide support for HB 2669. Please feel free to reach out to me if I can be of assistance to you in this worthy endeavor to protect our children and provide needed services to them. Thank you for your consideration.

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