

February 13th, 2023
Proponent Testimony
SB 6
Oral – Via Web Ex

Lauren Shiffman
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Senate District # 21

Dear Chairwomen Gossage and Committee Members:

Covid 19 taught us a lot. When it began, I believe Kansas did the best that it could with the information we had. But it has now given us an opportunity to review current laws in statute and explore their strengths and identify areas of improvement.

America was brilliantly established as a republic where the people elect representatives to represent them. **I am a proponent of this bill because it is simple, designates our elected officials to issue the orders in a health emergency, and with that, should garner bi-partisan support.**

We always hope our Governors will appoint highly qualified people and subject matter experts of infectious disease to be KDHE Directors to handle pandemics. But unfortunately, history has shown that is not always the case. In my opinion, Governor Brownback did not appoint a qualified person for this position. The then KDHE Director was an ophthalmologist. While I am sure they were very smart, infectious disease was not their specialty. It is with that example, I would rather they “recommend” vs govern. **Orders and governing should be reserved for our elected officials, closest to the people.**

It is no different in our local communities. The Board of County Commissioners is the Board of Health as they should be as elected officials. The health department provides recommendations and as a body they decide what is best for the community. This bill would help align this local structure with out state structure.

To close, **we are not changing or weakening Kansas’ ability to manage a pandemic with these changes. We are just shifting who will make the decision.** Please leave the recommendations to KDHE and the decisions to our elected officials.

Please support SB6 for favorable passage out of the committee.

Thank you,
Lauren Shiffman
Lenexa, KS