

March 18, 2023

Testimony to the Senate Public Health and Welfare Committee

NAME: **Leslie D. Mark**

TITLE: **Kansas Citizen / Voter**

EMAIL ADDRESS: **ldmark61@gmail.com**

BILL NUMBER: **SB314, *Prohibiting the secretary of health and environment from requiring COVID-19 vaccination for children attending a child care facility or school.***

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: **Opponent**

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: **Written Only**

Dear Chair Gossage & Members of the Committee,

SB 314 is a poorly drafted bill that, with a small change to language could codify a total resistance to vaccine mandates — well beyond Covid-19 immunizations. As the companion bill, SB 315, there are vast implications for the future of public health should this legislation pass into law. I ask, in all seriousness, Sen. Gossage, what exactly is your vision for a future Kansas?

Prohibiting the secretary of health and environment from requiring COVID-19 vaccination for children attending a child care facility or school further hampers county health officers from working with the KDHE to present a cohesive and coordinated response to difficult and fast moving epidemic challenges.

Indeed, one of the greatest achievements in human history has been the decline in infant and child mortality rates. Across long historical sampling, an average 25% of infants died in their first year of life; about half died as children. Notably, researchers have seen very similar mortality rates for children across a wide range of 43 historical cultures — from Ancient Rome and Ancient Greece to the pre-Columbian Americas, from Medieval Japan to Medieval England, and during the European Renaissance as well as in Imperial China — the statistic remained static: one in four newborns died in the first year of life and one of two died in childhood.

The main reason why billions of children died was recurring epidemics. No matter where or when they were born, half died as children from influenza, measles, cholera, diphtheria, the bubonic plague, and smallpox. Large parts of the adult population were also killed. Within just a few years the Black Death plague killed half of Europe's population. The epidemics (smallpox, measles, typhus and others) that the colonialists brought with them from Europe to the Americas often killed an even larger share of the population.

The world today is obviously very different. Infectious diseases are the cause of fewer than 1-in-6 deaths, and as the world made progress against the microbes our lives became much longer. Why do you want to recklessly undo scientific methodology created over centuries of fits and starts, failures and death and final success to score some elusive, temporal political gain? SB 314 is another reckless bill and guarantees a return to unjustifiable illness and early death. VOTE NO on SB 314.

Leslie D. Mark

Mission Hills, HD 25 / Sen 7