



March 21, 2023

Written Only Testimony in Opposition to SB 314

Madam Chair and Members of the Senate Public Health Committee,

My name is Tracy Russell and I serve as Executive Director of Nurture KC. One of Nurture KC's primary programs is the Mid America Immunization Coalition (MAIC) which educates and advocates on behalf of the importance to vaccination to health.

SB 314 addresses an issue that does not exist and has the potential to greatly impact vaccination authority in the future. The proposed policy takes the unprecedented step of prohibiting KDHE from requiring a particular vaccination. In this instance the prohibited mandate is COVID-19, a requirement that KDHE is not seeking or planning to institute. Adoption of this policy effectively removes KDHE's authority to implement vaccine policy based on the evidence and expertise of public health professionals, setting a precedent of political considerations rather than best scientific practices.

In a scientific poll on Kansans' opinions on vaccination conducted in 2022, a substantial majority (85%) expressed support for KDHE as the best authority for setting the wellness vaccine schedule. Seventy-three percent of respondents opposed transferring this authority to the legislature. I ask that you support Kansans and reject this bill.

Thank you for your consideration of this issue.