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Testimony to the Senate Public Health & Welfare Committee

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BILL NUMBER: SB 391
PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent
ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written Only

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to express my opposition to bill SB 391. It concerns me greatly to see the current public health regulations Kansans count on to keep our communities safe, be taken away.

Not only will this bill put ALL Kansans at risk from preventable infections, it is extremely concerning for vulnerable populations such as young children, the elderly, and those with lowered immune systems.

As I read this bill, I couldn't help but think of my own mother who was immunocompromised after having a kidney transplant. Or my good friend's young daughter who is battling her second round of leukemia. She is nine years old now, but from the age of two she has had a lowered immune system while undergoing treatment, except for those two years while she was in remission.

SB 391 weakens a core function of public health, which is to prevent the spread of diseases. This bill would prevent state and local officials from fully utilizing one of the most basic tools to stop the spread of diseases – requiring quarantines during an infectious disease outbreak.

None of us has a crystal ball. We don't know what the future holds and if there could be an outbreak of a unknown infectious disease or if we may need these foundational and effective tools to protect Kansans from something like the current [global measles outbreak we've seen in recent headlines](#).

Additionally, allowing disease to freely spread gets costly. The public health response to a measles outbreak 5 years ago cost around \$2.3 million. Without the isolation and quarantine measures currently in place, the increase in cases was estimated to cost \$120 million.

Kansans cannot afford the loss of human life or the financial costs associated with the limitations SB 391 would place on the public health response in Kansas.

Please support the current public health department requirements which keep our community, including the most vulnerable, safe from preventable diseases by voting no on SB 391.

Respectfully,

Erin Woods
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