

Written Testimony to the Senate Health Committee Opposing Senate Bill 390

Casey Swarts, retired individual
207 Buckskin Rd
Hutchinson, KS 67502

February 12, 2024

My name is Casey Swarts. I am a Kansas resident and currently reside in Hutchinson. Thank you for allowing me to write concerning my opposition to Senate Bill SB390.

While now retired, my professional background was in finance. However, about a dozen years ago, while still in my career, I spent 6 months working on a project with the CDC, NCUA, and FDIC to harden the US financial system, and my financial institution in particular, against airborne virus pandemics. At the time, the Bird Flu was the motivation for this endeavor. While I was never particularly interested in the soft sciences, such as medicine, this was an eye opener for me, as I learned of our extreme vulnerability, as a species, to virulent contagions. This project led to a long term interest in pandemic diseases and public policy, and to a deep respect for the work that the Centers for Disease Control do to protect Americans.

However, there was one contagion I hadn't anticipated in the 21st century; the virus of disinformation.

In my opinion, SB390 was formed in this crucible of "alternative facts" concerning mRNA COVID vaccines. Unfortunately, the attack on COVID vaccines comes with a price for ALL vaccines, and in the case of SB390 an attack on common sense medical care and quarantining as well.

SB390 would lead to a loss of protection for our children to vaccine-preventable diseases. Diseases we thought were long under control could stage a major comeback.

It would lead to a loss of protection for our employees. Employers in our state have an obligation to provide a safe workplace for their employees and a right to establish employee qualifications, which can include health and safety standards, to protect their employees and customers.

Vaccination requirements allow vulnerable Kansans to enjoy a more normal life with the knowledge that precautions have been taken to prevent vaccine-preventable diseases.

Again, in my opinion, the heart of the matter is the torrent of disinformation and hate levied at mRNA COVID vaccines, for political purposes.

mRNA COVID vaccines are true vaccines, using groundbreaking technology 30 years in the making. They do not change your DNA. The ingredients are well known and available to those who want to know. There is a mountain of empirical scientific evidence showing their effectiveness. They have saved many millions of lives, and while you may still get COVID after being vaccinated, you most likely won't die or have long COVID. The side effects, while real, are mostly minor compared to the disease for most people. Two of the scientists credited with the mRNA technology recently won the Noble prize in medicine. The attack on COVID vaccines comes with a price for ALL vaccines, as some of the public will believe the misinformation and refrain from getting ANY vaccines.

Misinformation has a downside. People WILL die from being unvaccinated. This bill codifies and encourages ill-fated behavior from a portion of mis-informed Kansans.

The issue is that this behavior effects ALL. If you harbor an infectious pathogen like Ebola, you have no right to infect me. Your rights end where my rights begin. Your conscience doesn't take precedence over my life. A just and prosperous society depend upon basic concepts such as this.

Please make sure SB390 doesn't pass out of this committee. Thank you.