

Testimony on House Bill 2302

presented to

House Health and Human Services Committee

by

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The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony in support of House Bill 2302 related to background screening and drug testing for laboratory staff with access to the secured biological laboratory.

Kansas Health and Environmental Laboratories have maintained a secure biological laboratory facility for the past 9 years under the Center for Disease Control's oversight. The secure laboratory supports public health as a reference laboratory evaluating and confirming biological agents or toxins that pose severe threats to human health. Since the agents and toxins that are evaluated in this facility have the potential to cause harm to the public, it is imperative that all personnel with access to these agents meet security standards.

The statute before you provides KDHE the authority to require background checks and drug screening tests as part of an ongoing requirement for staff that have access to these agents. The background check proposed uses a combination of state and federal databases (Kansas Bureau of Investigation and Federal Bureau of Investigation) to confirm the suitability of an individual to work in the secured laboratory. Furthermore, the statute provides for drug screening to provide additional information regarding suitability of a person to work in the secured laboratory. The background checks are required by federal law and the drug screening is highly recommended by the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

KDHE supports both the drug screening test and background screening requirements for staff with access to these biological agents because of the potential risks. Applicants or employees that do not pass the drug screening or background checks will not be hired or allowed to continue employment with KDHE. KDHE believes passing the background and drug screening checks must be a condition of employment.

Thank you for allowing me to provide this brief background and summary. I would now be happy to answer any questions by the committee.