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Neutral Testimony for HB 2404 – Establishing the Senior Services Task Force

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Thank you, Madam Chair Concannon and members of the House Children and Seniors Committee, for affording us the opportunity to testify regarding HB 2404, Establishing the Senior Services Task Force.

The Alzheimer's Association is the leading voluntary health organization in Alzheimer's care, support and research. Our mission is to eliminate Alzheimer's disease through the advancement of research; to provide and enhance care and support for all affected; and to reduce the risk of dementia through the promotion of brain health. In Kansas, we have two chapters which together serve all 105 counties.

While overall we are in favor of having a task force for senior issues, we have concerns with the proposed membership in the bill.

Of the 20 proposed members, four represent state agencies, six represent elected officials, eight represent providers, while only two represent consumers. We feel there should be more of a voice on the committee for the consumer. The consumer will speak solely on the true needs they have, the problems that they have encountered, and what processes are currently working for them.

We would suggest increasing the number of consumer based representatives. A few examples would be a caregiver, a representative from the AARP, and a representative from the Alzheimer's Association (since the main purpose of the task force listed in the bill is "The provision of care for seniors in the state of Kansas who suffer from Alzheimer's disease, dementia or other age-related mental health conditions.")

The Alzheimer's Association views this task force as a crucial step toward addressing the needs of those with dementia in Kansas. However, a task force is only as good as its members. Therefore, its membership should adequately represent the needs of seniors in Kansas.