



TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION OF SB 213

February 24, 2021

Chair Senator Robert Olsen and Vice Chair Senator Mark Steffen and members of the Committee:

I am submitting testimony in opposition of SB 213 on behalf of the Kansas Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (KAAP). The KAAP represents more than 400 practicing pediatricians in the state and has the fundamental goal that all children and adolescents in Kansas have the opportunity to grow safe and strong.

Infectious disease threats are real and the best tool we have to defeat them is vaccination. We live in a time now benefiting from hundreds of years of science and medical advancement. It is important to use the science and facts to make decisions that keep people safe and healthy. According to the National Institute of Health, in the U.S. we can prevent 42,000 early deaths and 20 million cases of disease by giving children born in a single year all routine vaccines.

Vaccines save money, and we know pandemics are extremely expensive. The National Institute of Health estimates that for every \$1 spent on childhood vaccines we save \$10.

As an employee I trust my employer to provide a safe working environment for me and for the people I work with. Additionally, because I am a physician, I depend on my employer to provide a safe place, free of dangerous disease when possible, for my patients. I take care of newborn babies, children recovering from cancer and patients who have genetic disease that predisposes them to infection because of their weakened immune system. They must feel safe to engage with the medical system for the care and treatment they need without concern for undo exposure to deadly infections.

As a doctor, I must be sure I am not acting as a "Typhoid Mary" and spreading infectious disease to my patients. New parents with their babies should feel safe to attend check-ups without worrying they may be exposed to whooping cough from a doctor, or nurse, or other staff member. I also want to be sure I am protected against infectious disease if I am exposed to it from one of my patients. Accidental needle sticks happen and in the case of hepatitis B this could be devastating for me and my family if I were not protected.

Kansas children rely on us to make decisions to protect them and their families from dangerous disease. The Kansas workforce is made up of mothers, fathers, grandparents and other family members who deserve to be safe from infection at their workplace in order to return home each day and care for their



families safely. I urge you to oppose SB 213 to keep Kansas families safe from vaccine preventable illnesses.

Respectfully submitted,

Gretchen Homan MD

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