

February 20, 2019

Adrienne Olejnik, Director of Government Relations
Kansas Action for Children
Written testimony in support of House Bill 2361
Committee on Children and Seniors

Dear Chairwoman Concannon and Members of the Committee:

Kansas Action for Children (KAC) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization committed to improving the lives of Kansas children and families by providing comprehensive data, advocating for sound public policy, and collaborating with lawmakers. Our organization cares deeply about ensuring that data concerning Kansas children is accurate. Without strong data, policymakers and advocates are not able to get a full picture of the demographics, needs, and concerns of Kansas children.

Currently, for a child to complete a school survey, parents are required to provide consent or “opt-in” to letting their child participate. HB 2361 would change the parental approval to being “opt out.” Parents still retain the authority to prevent their child’s participation in the survey, but switching to an “opt-out” approach would increase participation making surveys more accurate. With an “opt-out” policy, school districts will have greater ability to conduct surveys with enough participation to truly let us know how our kids are doing.

Kansas Action for Children uses student surveys in our resources. For example, the Kansas Communities That Care student survey has been a resource to Kansas Action for Children as we create materials for policymakers, practitioners, and the public, including using the survey in our KIDS Count materials.

While Kansas Action for Children recognizes the importance of parental authority and child privacy, HB 2361 balances continuing to give parents the ability to “opt-out” of school surveys, while increasing the student participation to make surveys as beneficial and educational as possible.

Accurate surveys are critical for Kansas communities and their children. We must continue to measure how our children are doing to ensure our state continues to thrive. For these reasons and more, we urge the Committee on Children and Seniors to support HB 2361.

Thank you for the opportunity to voice our support of this bill, and please do not hesitate to contact me at adrienne@kac.org if you have any questions.

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Shaping policy that puts children first