Chair Rubin and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for this opportunity to provide written testimony in opposition to HB 2031.

The Kansas Children’s Service League (KCSL) is the Kansas Chapter for Prevent Child Abuse America. As such, our core values on this most important issue of prevention and awareness of child sexual abuse are:

- Adults, not children, must take responsibility for preventing child sexual abuse;
- All adults must be provided the opportunity to learn to recognize the risks and warning signs of child sexual abuse in family, institution, or community;
- Healthy parent–child communication is a must, particularly around ensuring that children have healthy, age appropriate information regarding sexuality; and
- Reminding parents to be completely aware of all people of any age who spend one-on-one time with their children.

KCSL, in partnership with other community organizations, has utilized funding through the Kansas Attorney General’s office and the Southeast Kansas Community Foundation to provide training to parents, teachers, and other adults in southeast Kansas and Lyon County on the prevention of child sexual abuse. KCSL and our community partners utilize an evidence-informed curriculum known as Darkness to Light. This practical strategy uses stories from real people to educate adults on steps they can take to identify and protect children.

As adults, we are solely responsible for the safety of children in our families, schools, and communities. It’s important to teach children how to recognize and avoid risky situations, but it’s unrealistic to think that a child can fend off sexual advances by an adult who is in a position of power and/or trust over that child. Some of these well-intended, but inadequately researched programs, are showing negative unintended consequences in preventing child sexual abuse. Consider the national data on this subject:

- 10% of all children will be sexually abused before their 18th birthday.
- 90% of children who are victims of sexual abuse know their abuser.
- About 60% of children who are sexually abused are abused by people the family trusts.
- 30% of all children who are victims of sexual abuse are abused by a member of their family.
- For sexual abuse victims under age six, 50% of the abusers are family members.
• 43% of sexual assaults on children under age 6 are perpetrated by other children. 14% of the offenders are under age 12.
• Children living in rural areas are almost twice as likely to be victims of child sexual abuse as those children living in urban areas.

KCSL does not support HB 2031 as written. Schools alone cannot meet the education goals for a community as they are unlikely to reach the majority of “at-risk” children as early as the data indicates is needed. A more comprehensive evidence based community approach is recommended and has the greatest opportunity to actually prevent child sexual abuse.

The national Prevent Child Abuse America organization identifies several evidence based curriculums for States and communities to consider in creating an effective awareness and education program, including Darkness to Light as noted above. Support and expansion of the Kansas Attorney General’s effort in this subject matter should be considered.

Thank you for this opportunity to share KCSL’s perspective on child sexual abuse prevention.

Respectfully Submitted,

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Our Mission: To Protect and Promote the Well-Being of Children