



House Committee on Education
Chair, Rep. Adam Thomas
Hearing: February 8, 2023

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Mainstream Coalition
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Written-testimony

Position – OPPOSE HB2236; Establishing parents' right to direct the education, upbringing and moral or religious training of their children including the right to object to harmful and inappropriate educational materials

Chair Thomas and Members of the Committee,

Mainstream affirms the right of every Kansan to an affordable, equitable, and excellent public education, from early childhood to post graduate. We agree with the concept that a parent should have rights to guide the education, upbringing and moral or religious training of their children. Further, we agree that a child's education is a crucial element of their development, quality of life, and long-term success.

Mainstream was founded in 1993 by a bipartisan, multi-faith coalition of community leaders on the inalienable belief of religious freedom and equal representation in our government. Again, we agree with the principle of HB2236 that public education should not have a role in the religious training of any student, nor should they be held to any one set of religious values in the classroom. And again, we already have protections against that in our state's bill of rights: "The right to worship God according to the dictates of conscience shall never be infringed; nor shall any person be compelled to attend or support any form of worship; nor shall any control of or interference with the rights of conscience be permitted, nor any preference be given by law to any religious establishment or mode of worship."

However, HB2236 is not about religious training. This bill seeks to classify educational materials as "harmful and inappropriate" if a small group believes them to be a threat to how they want the world to operate.

Parents already have rights in Kansas to guide and support their child's education and upbringing. Public schools have the responsibility of providing students with the opportunity for a well-rounded education. We urge you to please oppose passage of HB2236.

Founded in 1993, the Mainstream Coalition is a nonpartisan nonprofit that advocates for common sense public policy in Kansas. Our members do more than vote.