

January 31, 2024

House Committee on Higher Education Budget
State Capitol
300 SW 10th Street
Topeka, KS 66612

Health Forward Foundation opposition to HB 2460 – prohibition of certain actions on diversity, equity, inclusion, and patriotism in faculty and student hiring and admissions.

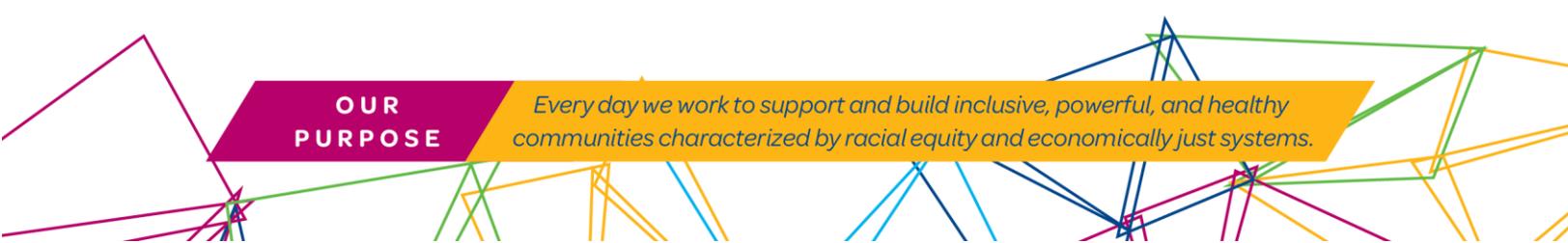
Chair Howe and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Health Forward Foundation (Health Forward), I submit this letter of testimony in opposition to House Bill 2460. Health Forward works to support and build inclusive, powerful, and healthy communities characterized by racial equity and economically just systems. We oppose this legislation because any limitation on post-secondary institutional consideration of diversity, equity and inclusion in their hiring and admissions processes will have chilling effects on ensuring cultural competency in our educational workforce, student bodies and our future workforce. Additionally, this legislation will cause direct economic damage to the state.

HB 2460 would have a negative impact on the health sciences professional pipeline in Kansas. Across Kansas, nearly 16% of hospital positions are vacant, according to the [Kansas Hospital Association](#). Research conducted by the [Pew Research Center in 2023](#) found a majority of employed U.S. adults (56%) agree that focusing on increasing DEI is a good thing. This bill would give people seeking to be trained and practice in the health sciences pause when choosing to come here. By hindering students' and physicians' ability to learn and work in an environment that actively supports tailored and culturally competent care, recruitment of health professionals to Kansas will be more difficult.

HB 2460 will also have a negative impact on health outcomes in Kansas. A diverse and culturally competent healthcare workforce reduces health disparities by building trusted relationships or even communicating diagnoses and treatment plans in a way that resonates with patients, according to the [Kaiser Family Foundation](#). But diversity and cultural competency in the provision of health care will be difficult to achieve without hiring educators and admitting students with cultural competency and diversity in mind and commitment to these institutions reflecting Kansas' increasingly diverse population.

Additionally, recent research suggests that anti-diversity, equity, and inclusion legislation such as this will be costly to the state overall. Economic modeling done by The Perryman Group – an independent economic and policy research firm – shows that through 2030, policy perceived to be discriminatory is likely to cost Kansas nearly \$900 million in economic output and over 1,400 jobs per year (nearly 8,500 jobs total). This bill will cut against the economic prosperity for all Kansans.



**OUR
PURPOSE**

Every day we work to support and build inclusive, powerful, and healthy communities characterized by racial equity and economically just systems.

Health Forward asks legislators on this committee to vote no on HB 2460. This legislation will move Kansas backward in many ways – employment, economics, health outcomes, and as a place welcoming to those from a variety of backgrounds. Achieving progress in diverse and culturally competent educational environments was made possible by positive affirmations and actions to ensure those making hiring and admissions decision consider the diverse makeup of those institutions. Please feel free to reach out to me at nmadden@healthforward.org if you have any questions or requests for additional information.

Respectfully,

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Health Forward Foundation

