

Welfare Reform Committee
Opposition to HB2430
Sister Therese Bangert - Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth
March 2, 2023

Chair Awerkamp and Committee,

Law Enforcement:

I will begin with law enforcement. I am wondering if anyone asked the Police Dept in my city, Kansas City, about this Bill? Frankly, I don't know. I served as a Police Chaplain with them since 1996 and although I no longer carry the pager each month, I still attend meetings and take an occasional call.

In KCK we have an Officer who works full time with the homeless. She spoke to the Chaplains about her role. She saw from her years on patrol that arresting the homeless was a solution to nothing. She worries about them both their physical and mental health. She knows the agencies that serve the homeless. Our outreach in KCK seems to be the opposite of this proposed law.

Leavenworth:

You have written testimony from Sister Vickie Perkins who I am proud to be a Sister of Charity with. I hope you can read her testimony. I want to point out:

- 35 Churches in Leavenworth came together to build a homeless shelter. She points out that some persons with addiction and mental health problems cannot follow the shelter's rules. She tells the story of James.

Wichita:

Wichita is blessed with an amazing organization called Center of Hope. For a long time, I have been a member of this agency's fan club and its leaders the Adorers Catholic Sisters and George Dinkel who is the Executive Director. The mission of Center of Hope is to assist people who are on the verge of losing their homes – thus preventing homelessness. Mr. Dinkel writes a quarterly newsletter. In it he lists people to pray for and adds a short description about each person or family.

- T-a 50 year-old who currently has no income. She has had multiple surgeries after being diagnosed with breast cancer. She was not able to pay her rent of \$675 this month.
- H – a 40-year-old mom with one child who has been off work due to mental health issues. She is currently homeless and trying to get back into an apartment with her 16year-old son.
- E- a 25 year old mom with two young children and is currently expecting a child. E has been homeless for the past three months and all of her belonging are packed in her car.

- S -a 34-year-old mom with one child. S does work and made \$934 this past month and is current on her bills except for the \$1718 she owes on her water bill as she had a leak. She will not be able to recover from this based on her income.

In his personal letter in the newsletter, Mr. Dinkel shows the wisdom of someone who is walking the walk with our sisters and brothers who knows their faces and catches their tears:

“Many of those coming to us for assistance are living under tremendous burdens and don’t seem to have any peace. Their lives are a constant life of anxiety and drama.”

Is the Kansas Legislators response to these sisters and brothers HB2340?

Fr Greg Boyle, one of my favorite writers and theologians, writes out of his 25-year-experiences with LA gang members and their families. Father Boyle preaches a God of Tenderness Who is always just asking us who are Children of God to choose love. The God Fr. Boyle preaches is always cheering us toward fullness of Life and each other. **“G” as the homies address him further comments that instead of judging the poor in how they live their lives we should be in awe at how they carry their multiple burdens.**

Some people in Leavenworth, Wichita and Kansas City have chosen how to respond to those burdens.

I implore you not to increase the burdens of those HB2340 would impact. Choose love!

Thank You for hearing me.

I give you a Greeting of Peace and my continued promise of prayers for this second half of the 2023 Legislative Session.

**Sister Therese Bangert
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