

Kelsey Draeger

Private citizen

SB 76

Written only

Opponent

3/4/2025

Chair Estes and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on SB 76 with you today. My name is Kelsey Draeger and I am a voter in Manhattan, KS. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

I oppose this bill in order to protect the rights of myself and my loved ones to be treated with respect and dignity. No one deserves to have the spaces they inhabit promising them the potential for violence or emotional vitriol because of who they are, and students should feel comfortable in school being who they are without ridicule. This bill will actively harm trans students.

Once again, I thank you all for hearing my story and thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of SB 76. Thank you.

Clara Duncan
Public School Educator
Senate Bill 76 Opposition - Written Testimony Only
House Committee on Education
Email address: stantonclara7845@gmail.com

February 28, 2025

I am submitting testimony in opposition to senate bill 76,

I am a teacher at Lawrence High School - I teach three levels of chemistry. I have been teaching in some capacity for ten years. One of the first and most obvious things you learn as a teacher is that student success inside and outside the classroom hinges on mutual respect with teachers

As a teacher, I will do everything I can to earn the trust and respect of those under me so that I can effectively help them craft a successful future. This mutual respect includes abiding by the social contract between teacher and student where politeness and respecting each others' wishes forms the foundation of understanding between pupil and authority. Each relationship between student and teacher is individual, and the decisions of naming and pronoun use should be left to each individual relationship.

This legislation flagrantly undermines a teacher's ability to build that respect with students. This legislation comes at a time when education hangs so precariously in the balance, legislation prohibiting the speech of teachers is not at all where the focus should be and betrays a deep lack of care for students.

Adolescents have a hard enough time as it is figuring out who they are and how they want to present themselves to the world. This bill legally protects people who would treat others without the respect to use their preferred names and pronouns. This is legislation that protects bullies, so therefore, the state has become a bully. Research, like that posted in *Nature Human Behavior*, has shown that states that implement anti-transgender laws typically show and increase in up to 72% in suicide rates for those between the age of 13 to 17. Surely, even if you do not agree with transgender people, you do not want more children to die than already do. If you vote in favor of this bill, those children's blood will be on your hands.

The timing of this legislation is also extremely suspect. I heard about this legislation 24 hours before the testimony was due. This to me shows a lack of interest in the opinions of the actual people it would affect and a damning indictment of how out of touch the individuals that put this bill together are. I strongly urge you to oppose SB 76.

March 3, 2025 – Opposition Testimony for SB 76

Dear Representative Erickson and Committee members,

Thank you for allowing written testimony on this bill. I ask you to vote NO.

The Kansas legislature continues to focus its time on the transgender community—just 1% of the population—rather than addressing issues that could truly benefit Kansans. The latest bill, SB 76, puts dedicated educators, who strive to support their students and create welcoming classrooms, at risk of being sued.

Every day, school district employees wake up with the safety and well-being of their students as their top priority. These public servants shoulder immense responsibility, facing challenges that few outside the profession can fully comprehend—or endure. SB 76 introduces yet another threat to their already demanding roles. Regardless of its intent, this bill will be perceived as yet another attack on teachers. It is unnecessary, and I urge you not to proceed in this direction.

As a retired teacher, I find this bill deeply troubling. Let me share examples of the unintended consequences it could have. I once taught in a K-12 building with 132 students, including seven seniors. As their English teacher and the director of their senior class play, I witnessed firsthand the creativity and collaboration of my students. When the play required more female roles than we had girls, several boys volunteered to step into those parts. The production was a success, and parents were proud of their children's performances. Under the restrictions of SB 76, however, I would have feared for my job, as might others. You might argue that we had parental permission—but did we, formally?

In another instance, teachers—myself included—often teach multiple siblings from the same family. It's not uncommon to mix up names before landing on the correct one, especially when names don't align with traditional gender expectations. If you're a parent, I'm sure you've done this with your own children! Yet under SB 76, such innocent mistakes could have serious repercussions.

This bill risks discouraging talented educators from entering or staying in the profession, further straining our schools. Its unintended consequences are far-reaching and harmful. I implore you to vote NO on SB 76.

Ethel A. Edwards
3634 SW Spring Creek Ct
Topeka, KS 66614

Krystina Edwards

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SB 76

WRITTEN ONLY

OPPONENT

3/4/2025

My name is Krystina Edwards and I am a voter in Johnson County/Overland Park. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

One of my closest friends is transgender and her pronouns are her right. Anyone deserves to be expressed fairly. We all use pronouns in day to day talk. When people speak about any of us we are referred to by our pronouns. Pronouns have been around for forever. No need to change that now.

Once again, I thank you all for hearing my story and thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of SB 76. Thank you.

Nicole Evans

Alum and former employee of the University of Kansas

nicoleevans961@gmail.com

SB 76 Enacting the Given Name Act

Opponent

Written

March 4th, 2025

My name is Nicole (she/hers) and I worked at the University of Kansas for nine years. In that time, I was a librarian, an advisor and a transfer credit specialist. During my time as an advisor, I worked directly with students every day for four years. I worked with multiple trans students—students whom I respected their chosen name, ignored their dead name and respected their pronouns, as they respected mine. Doing so was not just a courtesy, but a form of support, affirmation and self-care for both of us. It was treating a fellow human being with common decency and respect. It was a simple act of respecting, hearing, honoring and affirming my students. It was a way to further help and support them, which was my main goal, mission and purpose as an academic advisor.

Under SB 76, if approved, you would be banning me from doing my job: supporting students. For how can I support students if I cannot support who they are? How can I support their academic journeys if I cannot respect their very identity? Respect that starts, at a very foundational level, by their address? Under SB 76, I, as an award-winning advisor—an advisor who dozens of students told me changed their lives for the better, through my support, activism and advocacy on their behalf—I would be subjected to a lawsuit. For respecting my fellow person.

SB 76 is inhumane, vile and threatens the very basic decency we should be extending to each and every person. I no longer work at the university, but I will say this: if I were, and SB 76 was passed, I would gladly inflict an infinite number of lawsuits upon the university to continue showing respect, common decency and understanding to my trans colleagues, students and fellow human beings. Respecting pronouns and identity isn't a threat, nor something that needs oversight, moderation or correction. Misogyny, homophobia and white supremacy are. Which is *exactly* what you are supporting if you vote in approval for or pass SB 76.

SB 76 does not represent me and I stand staunchly against it.

Cheers,

Nicole Evans (she/hers)

Laura Fails

private citizen

SB 76

Written only

Opponent

3/3/2025

Chair Estes and Members of the Committee, I am writing today to share my thoughts on SB 76. My name is Laura Fails and I am in a voter in Pottawatomie County. I want to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

I have worked in the public education setting for 20 years. SB 76 is an attempt to solve something that is NOT a problem. Instead, it will CAUSE many more problems. The biggest harm will be to our students. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for kids ages 15-19 and LGBTQ kids are more at risk because of things exactly like this. Studies have shown that LGBTQ kids are twice as likely to attempt suicide. This is something I've personally experienced with one of my son's friends. Please leave these kids alone. There are so many other pressing issues that truly affect Kansans. SB 76 puts a tremendous burden on educators who are trying to TEACH and educate future leaders. It puts everyone at risk of being sued, it will divert time, energy and resources from the educational process and the true needs of our students.

Thanking you for taking the time to read these responses. I hope you give them serious consideration and I encourage you to vote no on the passage of SB 76.

House Committee on Education
March 4th, 2025
Senate Bill 76

Jay Flatland, Private Citizen
Testimony in Opposition

Madame Chair Estes and members of the Committee:

Thank you for considering my testimony. My wife and I live in Olathe Kansas with our 4 kids, 2 of whom are transgender.

Requiring parental permission for teachers and school staff to use preferred names and pronouns is not necessary. While the language aims to prevent teachers from promoting an ideology against parents' wishes, the real reason teachers may avoid informing parents is for the safety of the child. Parents may not respond kindly to their own children's preferences, and children may express this to teachers. In the vast majority of cases this is not an issue, but in the few cases it is, discretion for teachers and school staff is necessary.

The bill adds causes of civil action against schools compelling use of preferred names and pronouns of teachers and students – This language is not necessary. Section 1983 already protects teachers and students from being compelled to use speech against their beliefs. Multiple cases have been raised successfully, and in many instances the mere threat of section 1983 action has resolved cases. There is no need to add even more causes of civil action to our statutes.

Furthermore, this language conflicts with the school's ability to enforce language policy to prevent disruptions in education. If enacted, school bullies would be able to harass my kids without consequence by deadnaming and misgendering them. Despite being a clear disruption to their education, schools would be unable to prevent the disruption due to this language.

Therefore, I respectfully urge you to oppose SB 76.

Sincerely,

Jay Flatland

Hilary Fuller

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SB 76

WRITTEN ONLY

OPPONENT

3/4/2025

Chair Estes and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me a chance to share my thoughts on SB 76 with you today. My name is Hilary Fuller and I am a voter in Johnson County/ Overland Park. I am writing today to please encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

The passage of SB 76 opens a door for harassment of students who are simply trying to live their lives on their terms. I'm aware not everyone understands the psychology of other's choices or feels empathy towards those who think differently but it is in everyone's best interest to continue to support our community members while we grow and learn from one another. It is our job as adults to protect our children from harm, including bullying and harassment.

Again, thank you for hearing my story and thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you to all vote NO on the passage of SB 76.

To: House Education Committee
From: Rebecca Obold-Geary
Date: March 4, 2025
Re: SB 76 Written Testimony-only Opposition

Dear House Education Committee,

I am writing to you as a private citizen. It is my job and responsibility to treat students with respect, build a positive relationship with each of them and provide a safe learning environment in Kansas public schools. I care about the students and families with whom I work. Thus, I am in opposition to SB 76.

Educators know all students need to feel supported and included in order to feel safe and learn. This includes students who are transgender. The American Medical Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics report that using the non preferred name and/or pronoun of a student has harmful effects. In addition, a landmark 2018 study in the *Journal of Adolescent Health* found that transgender youth who could use accurate names and pronouns experienced 71% fewer symptoms of severe depression, a 34% drop in reported suicidal thoughts and a 65% decrease in suicide attempts. Clearly, all students need respect, physical and emotional safety. Teachers and educators are part of this responsibility. Furthermore, denying a student's right to use their preferred name or pronouns at school may constitute a violation of Title IX and the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution.

This bill is overly broad, open to misinterpretation and could have serious emotional and financial consequences.

I am in opposition to SB 76 and/or any other legislation that puts students and public school educators/employees at risk for harmful effects. I urge you to oppose SB 76.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Obold-Geary

Danielle George

dvoorhees24@gmail.com

Private Citizen

03/04/2025

Opponent

Representative Estes Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on SB 76.

My name is Danielle George and I am a voter in Spring Hill. I am writing today to encourage you to vote NO on SB 76.

This bill is not only overly broad but also infringes on personal rights. Politicians should stop this invasion into classrooms and schools across the state and into the lives of students and families they don't know. This overreach of government would undermine the ability of educators to do their jobs and create healthy learning environments.

Does this apply to shortened names like "John" instead of "Jonathan" or teachers who have changed their name due to marriage? This is not a matter for politicians to decide, it is up to each student and their families.

In closing I thank you for hearing my opinion and again urge you to vote NO on SB 76.

Thank You

Danielle George

Spring Hill

SB 76 – WRITTEN ONLY

RE: Opposition to SB 76

House Education Committee
Monday, February 10 of 2025
Deacon Godsey
Lead Pastor, Vintage Church

Chairwoman Estes and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opposing testimony in opposition of Senate Bill 76.

As a Christian pastor, the parent of a trans daughter, and an Adjunct Professor of Religion, I speak from direct personal and professional experience when I say SB 76 will do nothing to materially protect the lives of non-trans youth and families, but will undoubtedly create a context for continued, ongoing harm to the mental, emotional, relational, and physical health of trans youth and their families.

More broadly, this bill would create undue strain on the lives and work of the educators who will be forced to operate in the environment this bill would create, and would remove local decision-making power from schools and school boards re: what is in the best interest of individual students. In addition, this legislation flies in the face of widely accepted best practices for an educator's relationship to their students, and in the face of research-based facts relevant to this discussion.

Finally, as a professor of World Religions – and other biblically-rooted college courses – I also wish to express my deep concern over the constitutional overreach of this type of legislation, the way it violates educators' free speech protections under the First Amendment, and the ongoing harm it would do to the overall civic discourse in our pluralistic society.

Thank you for this opportunity, and for your time.

Respectfully submitted,

Deacon Godsey
Lead Pastor, Vintage Church – Lawrence, KS

Melissa Goldman
Educator
Senate Bill 76 Opposition - Written Testimony Only
House Committee on Education
Email Address: melissajanegoldman@gmail.com

February 28th, 2025

Chair Estes and House Committee on Education Members:

My name is Melissa Goldman and I am writing as a public school educator in opposition to Senate Bill 76 (SB 76). A large part of why I have chosen a role in public schools is that I am a proud product of Kansas public schools, from kindergarten through one of my master's degrees. Previously, I taught in New Mexico, but this year I had the opportunity to return to the very high school from which I graduated and join the faculty there. I was lucky throughout my education to have teachers who supported and respected their students' growth as individuals, and that is something I feel lucky to be able to return to my students now.

Public schools, by their very definition and structure, serve students from a variety of backgrounds with a variety of needs. As a teacher, it is my job to meet students, all of my students, where they are and facilitate their intellectual growth. They simply will not learn as much or master skills as thoroughly when they feel unsafe in or disengaged from the classroom. This is not a radical statement, but something that has been supported in educational research for decades. Even the conservative Thomas B. Fordham Institute recognizes that "[l]earning suffers when students fear for their safety, worry about being bullied, or don't sense their teachers have high expectations for their success" ("Children learn best when they feel safe and valued, 4-8-2021). SB 76 would create an environment that encourages bullying and decreases general safety while also telling teachers that they do not need to serve all students.

I oppose SB 76, because it targets a particular group of students and provides a loophole for increased bullying, making our schools less safe. Transgender students, the target of this bill, have every right to be in our schools and to expect the same level of support and safety as any other student. SB 76 singles out transgender students and approves of making their bullying untouchable through school policy and discipline. GLSEN, a national LGBTQ+ education organization, has found in multiple studies that school bullying plays a role in suicidal ideation for many transgender students, whereas being in supportive schools that address such bullying cuts this risk greatly. By voting for SB 76, you are saying that you are fine with students committing suicide.

It is short-sighted, however, to think that SB 76 would affect only transgender students. Transgender students are not the only students who might receive teasing concerning their gender and appearance. In fact, the most common target of gender-based bullying are

heterosexual, white boys whose peers decide they are not sufficiently masculine, whether it be their height, weight, or other characteristics that are often outside the control of a developing child. Once their peers figure out that they cannot easily be held accountable for using the wrong pronouns or name by teachers and administrators who are afraid of legal action, this sort of behavior will become rampant, likely spreading to become the favored tactic of bullies. Yes, SB 76 specifies pronouns and names consistent with a student's birth certificate, but this is not something that is readily available to teachers or other students since it is a personal document with private information and people do not simply walk around with it at all times.

Regardless of your feelings on the intentions of SB 76, I hope that you can see how the current bill is not written in a way that supports student learning or can be effectively administered. Moreover, this is not a topic worthy of the committee's time and energy when there are so many bigger issues facing education in our state. Please turn your attention to improving student learning and achievement, instead of passing policies that will undercut them further.

Sincerely,
Melissa J. Goldman

SB 76 Written Opposition Testimony

House Education Committee

March 4, 2025

Krista Gordon, kristag71@gmail.com

Parent in Blue Valley School District, School District Employee, Voter

Representative Estes & members of the committee,

Greetings. I would like to thank you for your time and service on behalf of Kansans. I am also writing to voice my opposition to SB 76.

My name is Krista Gordon and I am a voter, parent and school employee in Johnson County, Kansas. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76. I oppose this bill first and foremost because all people deserve the right to be called by their preferred name. This imparts dignity and respect in schools and the community at large.

School should be a safe place for students, where teachers, staff and coaches can use a student's preferred name out of respect for someone's personhood without fear of retribution. Above all, children should be valued for who they are. Time spent legislating things like this can be better spent making a positive change for kids in school instead of adding stress to children that are perhaps already facing mental health challenges.

From what I understand, this bill will put teachers (and I assume other adults and staff in the building) in jeopardy if they use a student's preferred pronouns or name without first having written permission from the parent. The logistics behind obtaining and producing evidence of written parental permission with every interaction is impossible and opens public schools and teachers to a myriad of legal difficulties. This will cost Kansas both people and money. I invite you to visit any neighborhood school and interact with children to understand the gravity of the restrictions outlined in SB 76 or for that matter any other vote going forward that harms Kansas schools and children.

Opposing this bill and standing on common sense should be obvious to anyone that has ever loved a child. In fact, writing a letter imploring that we respect a person's name without the need to produce papers is mind boggling to me. I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of SB 76. Thank you.

Respectfully,,
Krista Gordon

Emera Greenwood, LMSW

6434 Melrose Lane

Shawnee, KS 66203

emera@ku.edu

SB-76 Requiring employees of school districts and postsecondary educational institutions to use the name and pronouns consistent with a student's biological sex and birth certificate and authorizing a cause of action for violations therefor.

Opponent

Written testimony only

3/4/2025

My name is Emera Greenwood, and I would like to share my thoughts about the bill, SB-76, which you are considering today. As a social worker I see clients who have been affected by trauma, and bullying in school is a type of trauma that consistently comes up, regardless of whether the client is cisgender or transgender. It tends to continue to cause suffering throughout people's lives, and often leads them to therapy, where we begin to disentangle the core beliefs that they were taught by peers and teachers.

SB-76, requiring faculty and staff of schools and higher educational institutions in Kansas to use names and pronouns that align with the exact name and sex on a student's birth certificate will cause harm. It will especially cause harm to trans students, essentially forcing them to have their identities challenged throughout each day of school. It will make schools a hostile and cruel environment for students who are already marginalized. It will also cause harm to many cisgender students, and it will impede teachers in their efforts to give their students a sense of belonging. It will also deny teachers and faculty freedom of speech.

I appreciate your time today, and I hope you will reject SB-76 and give all students a chance to learn in classrooms that feel supportive.

Thank you,

Emera Greenwood

Date: March 3, 2025

To: House Committee on Education

From: Laura Gunderson, LMSW

RE: WRITTEN-ONLY Testimony in Opposition of SB 76

Committee Members,

I want to thank you for this opportunity to write to you about my concerns regarding SB 76. I am writing to you as a concerned private citizen of Manhattan, Kansas, and as an outpatient therapist based in Junction City, Kansas. As a social worker, one of my highest priorities is the ongoing emotional and physical wellbeing of my clients. As a provider who specializes in LGBTQIA+ competent mental healthcare, I am concerned for transgender and gender diverse Kansans who will be negatively impacted by this bill. Therefore, I urge you to vote no on the passage of SB 76, a proposed bill that would not only ban school and post-secondary employees from using a minor student's affirmed name and pronouns, but would effectively grant impunity to students and faculty who purposefully choose to use non-affirming names and pronouns for their transgender and gender diverse classmates and students.

As someone who has worked in school settings as a mental health provider, I have witnessed firsthand how use of a minor's affirmed name and pronouns creates a sense of safety and respect that allows students to thrive and achieve in school settings. SB 76 puts transgender and gender diverse minors at risk. Research indicates that anti-transgender policies in schools lead to increased rates of depression, anxiety, and suicidal ideation and attempts among transgender students. It is vital to clarify that transgender youth are not inherently prone to suicide risk or mental health challenges because of their gender identity, but rather, are at a higher risk due to the mistreatment, prejudice, bullying, and stigmatization they experience from individuals in their lives, such as classmates and school faculty, or by larger institutions, such as the Kansas State legislature. To ban school and post-secondary employees from using a minor student's affirmed name and pronouns would be a legislative overstep, and would have detrimental impacts on Kansan transgender youth, as well as school employees who are just doing their best to teach future generations and create safe, healthy, and welcoming learning environments for all students.

Schools have a legal and moral obligation to respect every student's gender identity, including the use of their affirming names and pronouns. Each person, including transgender students, should have the right to self-determination, privacy, and free speech regarding their identity and expression, without interference from the state government.

Thank you all for taking the time to read my testimony. I urge you to think about transgender Kansans and vote no on the passage of SB 76.

Sincerely,

Laura Gunderson, LMSW, Constituent of KS Senate District #22 and KS House District #66

SB 76 Opposition Testimony

House Education Committee

March 4, 2025

Lynn Hardy, LynnGHardy@gmail.com

Private Citizen, Kansas Resident 40+ years

Representative Estes,

School district employees wake up every morning knowing that the safety and well-being of their students is their top priority. These public servants shoulder enormous responsibility every day as they enter their workplaces to serve Kansas children. The stress of this profession is something few outside of education fully understand—or could even endure themselves. SB 76 introduces yet another threat to their profession, further exacerbating the challenges they face. Regardless of its intent, this bill will be perceived as yet another attack on teachers. It is unnecessary, and we urge you not to proceed in this direction.

This Bill is damaging and harmful to so many people in so many ways. Research shows that when transgender youth feel supported by their families and medical providers, they experience better health outcomes. Specifically, when they feel affirmed, they report fewer suicidal thoughts and attempts, increased self-esteem, and a greater sense of safety in their community, which positively impact their ability to learn in the classroom.

I implore you to show mercy and love toward ALL our Kansas neighbors. This bill does neither.

Sincerely

Lynn Hardy, Kansas resident 40+ years

Isaac Hargett
Private Citizen
isaacachargett@gmail.com

Opponent
Written Testimony
Tuesday, March 4, 2025

Chair Estes and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony against Senate Bill 76.

My name is Isaac Hargett, I am a student at Fort Hays State University, and prior to coming to Hays I lived in Manhattan, KS for my entire life. I am opposed to this bill on the grounds that it persecutes transgender youth and limits the freedom of speech of teachers. I have many friends that are transgender, and some of them are not accepted by their parents. If they found out about their child's true feelings, my friends would be abused, beaten, and kicked out of the house. Just because of who they are, they could be brought within an inch of their life. This has happened across America, where transgender adolescents are disproportionately likely to be abused physically, sexually, and psychologically. This leads me to believe that to prevent youth from being abused, harmed, and possibly killed by their parents, they must be allowed to choose who they reveal their identity to.

The requirement to receive parental permission for a student to go by a name differing from their birth certificate creates numerous complications and creates strain on Kansas's already stressed education system. The bureaucracy created by this bill would require school administrators, teachers, and staff to dedicate more of their time to a meaningless project that only hurts good Kansans. To deal with this, teachers must ignore the wishes of the students they care about so much and call them by names and pronouns that they know make their students uncomfortable. This creates a burden for parents as well, as if their child simply has a nickname, such as Nick instead of Nicholas, or Greg instead of Gregory, they must take the time to figure out how to find the required form, fill it out, and send their child with it to school. This bill, if implemented, infringes on teacher's freedom of speech as it forces them to call students by their given name, even if the student and teacher both want the student to have a different name. Teachers would be forced to call someone by a different name, a blatant infringement on their freedom of speech. Not only this, but teachers, who already have incredibly low wages, could be sued for violating this bill, even if it is done accidentally. This would likely cause teachers to leave the state, which would in turn increase the already large shortage of teachers in this state. This is a great danger to the state, and would put even more strain on our education system, something that we cannot afford.

I am completely and utterly opposed to SB 76 because of the strain it puts on the education system, the harm it brings to transgender Kansan youth, the processes it would require to be created, and the infringement of the freedom of speech of teachers and students.

Thank you for your time.

Opposition Testimony for SB 76
For the House Committee on Education
March 2, 2025
Kirk and Rhonna Hargett, Manhattan, KS

Chair Estes and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on SB 76. We are writing to you as parents whose oldest child will be directly harmed through the passing of this bill.

Our daughter was born and raised in Kansas. She is now a thriving student and student worker at K-State. She inherited her seamstress great grandmother's talent for sewing, which has enabled her to make her own clothes and to help our church's quilting group make blankets for the homeless in our community and many others around the world. She regularly helps her grandparents with technology and house cleaning. She is a dedicated baker and loves making cinnamon rolls, pizza and other delicious items for our family, friends, and church events. We tell you these things to make sure that you are aware of her humanity. She isn't just a transgender person, she is a beloved daughter, a native Kansan and a child of God.

She was not influenced by her family or by any teachers to "decide" that she was transgender. This is the way she was born. The only decision she made was to be herself. We do not know what "made" her transgender, but we know that she has not experienced any pressure to use any particular pronoun or name, undergo any medical procedures, or anything like that. This is something that she came to understand on her own, and our belief that she was made in the image of God has led us to be supportive of her.

Statistics show that 30-40% of transgender teens attempt suicide, but that percentage drops drastically when they have a supportive family and community. Both the American Medical Association and the American Psychological Association have made statements that using chosen pronouns and names is best practice for the health and well-being of transgender individuals.

When you promote bills like SB 76, you are demonstrating a disregard for the well-being of our child. You are willing to expose her to serious harm, even though she is kind and caring and makes positive contributions to our state.

Besides the philosophical issues, there are practical issues that you should consider. There are several states that we will not visit because of how they treat transgender people. Passing bills like this will reduce Kansas travel from not just those who have a transgender person in their family, but also those who don't want to spend their money in a state that bullies some of its most vulnerable children. By passing this bill it makes our home state look like a backwater. Our universities are already shrinking, if this bill passes that shrinkage will only increase as both Kansans and the many out-of-state students will go elsewhere. It will make it more difficult for our universities and businesses to recruit workers to come to Kansas because they won't want to put their children in harmful learning environments.

This bill will subject transgender kids and college students to bullying and harm their mental and physical health. We ask you to vote this bill down and allow transgender kids to live their lives and become valuable contributors to our great state.

Marcel Harmon

Private Citizen and former School Board Member / President (USD 497)

marcelharmon@gmail.com

SB 76 Enacting the Given Name Act

Opposition Testimony (written only)

For the House Education Committee

Hearing Date: 3/04/2025

Chair Estes and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to share my opponent testimony. My opposition stems from my previous experience as a school board member and as the parent of a transgender young adult who attended public schools in Lawrence, KS. Banning school and post-secondary employees from using a minor student's preferred pronouns/name and including an extremely broad damages clause in the bill are direct attacks on a) public schools and higher education institutions and their employees and b) transgender youth by stripping away their rights to privacy, safety, self-determination, and free speech.

As a former school board member (who heard directly from teachers and staff, administrators, transgender students and their families, as well as various community groups and individuals on such issues), I know that such a bill will result in varying forms of the following across the state.

- The a) reckless, overly broad damages section, allowing litigation from those who only overheard a conversation, combined with b) the near impossible task of ensuring every district employee and student has the knowledge of every student's name and sex listed on their birth certificate, will increase the risk of school districts and their employees having to deal with frankly ridiculous lawsuits. This uses critical and limited district resources, financial and otherwise, taking away from school districts' mission of equitably providing high quality education to all of their community's students. *It will be a waste of taxpayer dollars.*
- The threat of lawsuits will also be increased by NOT using a student's preferred pronouns or name. Schools have a legal obligation to respect student gender identity, even if names or

markers haven't been legally changed. Ignoring that could be seen as a violation of Title IX and the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution (which U.S. courts have ruled in the past).

- This bill will further add to the cost of district operations, as administration will have to develop, install, and maintain systems of monitoring and enforcement (of a legislated policy that is frankly cruel and *wasteful of district resources, and therefore taxpayer dollars*). School board meetings themselves will no doubt have increased time (not insubstantial) devoted to discussing logistics, individual cases, hearing from the public, etc., as a result of the bill.
- It removes the authority of local school board members, who have been duly elected by their local communities, to make such decisions for their own community. It *takes away the local control* that so many legislators claim to champion.
- The increased stress and financial threat that this will add to school district teachers and staff will increase the rate of those leaving their respective professions within the public school system, as well as act as a deterrent for those choosing to enter the profession and/or working for public schools. Kansas public schools already struggle to keep them adequately staffed, especially many of our rural districts. This will just add to the problem.
- Schools are trying to create physical and social environments that are conducive to learning for all of their students (and conducive to teaching and providing support for all of the adult employees). Increasing the risk of bullying and harassment by a) outing or drawing attention to students who don't wish it and b) essentially giving permission to other students to deadname and/or misgender students reduces the quality of the teaching / learning environment (for the offenders as well as the targets).
- The quality of the teaching / learning environment will be further reduced by the disruptions to relationships and operations that will inevitably happen as a result of everyone worrying about being reported and listened to (spied on). Trust, which is critical in a school environment, will be negatively impacted.
- The exploitation of free speech to justify this bill is particularly egregious. An educator can easily lead and respectfully "shape classroom discussions and debates" of gender related issues that are "a matter of public concern" without violating students' rights in the process.

I have previously shared in detail through past emails and articles the impacts that bills like this, and the rhetoric surrounding them, have on my family. Here are some examples.

- Our youngest is transgender and he graduated from Lawrence Free State High in 2023. He was fortunate that teachers and staff accepted his gender identity and used his preferred pronouns and name. It contributed significantly to his mental health and success in school. And it meant a lot to his mother and I. Given all that, he would still find himself in school situations that were uncomfortable and even a little scary to him – some of the worst were making use of restrooms and locker rooms. He would tend to hold it most of the day as opposed to using a restroom, which negatively impacted his health and learning. And that occurred despite the high school being a mostly supportive environment (likely contributed to by the amount of anti-transgender sentiment in society currently, including the Kansas legislature). I really worry about other transgender students and their families who would have to experience school under such a bill.
- And our son hates knowing that legislators craft legislation impacting LGBTQ individuals and vote on it without knowing what it's like to be LGBTQ, without ever having meaningful conversations with someone who's LGBTQ, or conversations with the teachers, counselors, etc., who provide support for all students, including transgender students, in school. He hates hearing about other trans and LGBTQ youth and people who've been harassed and attacked, or worse.
- He hates having that nagging fear about his safety in the back of his head when he's in public, just taking the bus, at a pride parade, etc. He hates being misgendered at work or elsewhere in public and having to weigh whether or not it's worth pointing out relative to the potential reaction that might occur. He hates having to weigh the pros and cons, that vary by location, every time he needs to decide which restroom to use when he's in public.
- The stress that parents and other family members of transgender individuals feel also takes a toll. Reference the Scientific American article linked to in this piece: [Families Find Ways to Protect Their LGBTQ Kids](https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/families-find-ways-to-protect-their-lgbtq-kids-from-serious-harm-physical/) - <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/families-find-ways-to-protect-their-lgbtq-kids-from-serious-harm-physical/>. “Diamond, the University of Utah psychologist, says this hypervigilant state can be devastating to parents. She has studied minority stress in members of the LGBTQ community and in their caregivers, and she believes the absence of safety erodes their mental health. The same response

designed to protect humans from the proverbial saber-toothed tiger is now perpetually activated by headlines signaling that LGBTQ kids are threatened.” For us, it’s a stress that’s always there. Fortunately for us, we have the resources and insurance available to take advantage of mental healthcare. But not every Kansan does.

I would encourage you to have some heartfelt discussions with constituents who are teachers, faculty, administrators, etc., as well as those who are transgender, their families, and/or who are allies. Read up on this. Delve through the information provided by the likely large number of opponents of this bill. And for those who are curious, below is some information on gender and sex from various scientific perspectives. This bill really is an attack on public schools, higher education institutions, and transgender students and their families.

Once again, I thank you all for reviewing my thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to do what’s best for Kansas and vote no on the passage of SB 76 out of committee.

SCIENCE, the natural, medical, and social sciences, they **ALL** tell us that biological sex and gender are not the same thing, and that neither are binary (a few references are below). And because of that, the physical and social environments we provide our young people need to reflect this reality. Please step back and look at this with some curiosity – expand what you think you know about biological sex and gender.

- Biological sex is chemically and genetically more complex than XX and XY – it isn’t actually binary (and this applies to other species as well). From some of the sources out there, those born with atypical genitalia (other terms used include intersex and ambiguous genitalia) range from 0.1% to 2%. With 8.2 billion people currently on the planet, then anywhere from 8.2 million to 164 million people currently alive today may have been born with some type of atypical genitalia. Biology, genetics, medicine, etc. do not support the statement that biological sex is binary. Here are some sources if you’re interested.
 - [Atypical Genitalia \(Formerly Known as Ambiguous Genitalia\):
https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/22470-atypical-genitalia-formerly-known-as-ambiguous-genitalia.](https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/22470-atypical-genitalia-formerly-known-as-ambiguous-genitalia)
 - [What's intersex? https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/gender-identity/sex-gender-identity/whats-intersex.](https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/gender-identity/sex-gender-identity/whats-intersex)

- [Sex Redefined: The Idea of 2 Sexes Is Overly Simplistic:](https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/sex-redefined-the-idea-of-2-sexes-is-overly-simplistic1)
<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/sex-redefined-the-idea-of-2-sexes-is-overly-simplistic1>.
- [Brain Sex Differences Related to Gender Identity Development: Genes or Hormones?](https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7139786/) -
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7139786/>.
- While some of the literature will label these occurrences as disorders, it's important to recognize that such a label, outside of the medical context (which admittedly can impact one's health depending on the specific condition), has large cultural implications – it's a value judgement. *Decisions made by parents (and adults later in life) relative to courses taken are heavily influenced by pressure to “fit” within a society that doesn't understand or even accept the reality of their conditions.* But they were born that way.
- Gender, while influenced by biological sex, is heavily determined by cultural factors and societal norms. It is the inner sense of self as female, male, fluid, or some other alternative gender (though the specific details of how this manifests individually and collectively is still a subject of debate among experts and varies somewhat by discipline). But the social sciences overall do not support the idea that gender and biological sex are the same thing or that gender is binary. Here are some sources if you're interested.
 - [Gender is conceptualized in different ways across cultures:](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/language-and-cognition/article/gender-is-conceptualized-in-different-ways-across-cultures/88A19740AE09E6299B9836158053B57F)
<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/language-and-cognition/article/gender-is-conceptualized-in-different-ways-across-cultures/88A19740AE09E6299B9836158053B57F>.
 - [Sociology of Gender:](https://othersociologist.com/sociology-of-gender/) <https://othersociologist.com/sociology-of-gender/>.
 - [Brain Sex Differences Related to Gender Identity Development: Genes or Hormones?](https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7139786/)
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7139786/>.
 - [Adding Some Curiosity to Common Sense:](https://marcelharmon67.substack.com/p/adding-some-curiosity-to-common-sense)
<https://marcelharmon67.substack.com/p/adding-some-curiosity-to-common-sense>.

SB 76 Testimony

I am a Lenexa resident, active voter, public educator for 27 years and parent of a non-binary child.

I have concerns with this bill for many reasons.

- 1) It is beyond the scope of government responsibilities.
- 2) Students use alternate names all the time - shortened versions of their legal names, family pet names (for example a student who is the third of their name going by Trip for triple), middle names etc.
- 3) This bill continues to blow out of proportion what actually happens in school. My school district uses a form that parents can sign to help communicate their permission with the school. Very rarely have I had a parent not sign the form.
- 4) This bill continues to target the transgendered population for doing nothing more than existing. It will further attempt to legalize discrimination in a country that claims to be trying to overcome discrimination.
- 5) It ignores hundreds of medical and psychological scientific studies that show gender affirming care is the healthiest approach to working with people who are transgendered - this includes using their correct chosen names and pronouns.
- 6) I have had the privilege of being the first adult that some of my students have come out to. This has meant that they were ready to start sharing with the world who they are, and coming out to me is really just practice for being able to tell the more important adults in their lives (their families).
- 7) I have seen, first hand, what can happen with teens who are exploring their identities are made to feel shamed, broken, or unloved by their families, friends, and our large culture. I have witness depression and suicide attempts and knew student who took their own lives.

Please stop this continued attempt to legalize discrimination and allow parents and school to work together, as we have been, when students show any kind of need.

Thank you for your time,
Jamie Heller
Lenexa, KS

March 4, 2025

Testimony to the House Education Committee

NAME: Amy Hill

TITLE: Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: amykfrost@yahoo.com

BILL NUMBER: SB 76

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written only testimony

Chairman Estes and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts on SB 76 with you today. My name is Amy Hill and I live in Olathe.

I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76. Using the name and pronouns a child has requested is important for their safety and their confidence.

Research has shown that if a transgender child has just one adult in their life who listens and respects them they are less likely to consider suicide. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people aged 10 to 14, and the third leading cause of death among 15-24 year olds (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022). Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ+) young people are at significantly increased risk.

You don't have to agree with or understand the name or pronouns someone chooses but please don't take away someone else's ability to be supportive of kids who are finding their way. One adult respecting a child and who they are could be life saving.

Please vote no on SB 76.

Thank you for your time,
Amy Hill
Olathe, KS

March 4, 2025

Testimony to the House Education Committee

NAME: Amy Hinrichs

TITLE: Kansas Citizen

EMAIL ADDRESS: aloramy.hinrichs@yahoo.com

BILL NUMBER: SB 76

PROPONENT, OPPONENT, or NEUTRAL: Opponent

ORAL or WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY: Written only testimony

Dear Chair & members of the committee,

I am writing to voice my opposition to bills SB 76. How we address each other matters. It is a sign of respect and civility.

According to an article in the University of Texas News, “Researchers interviewed transgender youths ages 15 to 21 and asked whether young people could use their chosen name at school, home, work and with friends. Compared with peers who could not use their chosen name in any context, young people who could use their name in all four areas experienced 71 percent fewer symptoms of severe depression, a 34 percent decrease in reported thoughts of suicide and a 65 percent decrease in suicidal attempts.”

As a person of faith, I am deeply concerned about statics like this. This bill brings an increased chance of depression and suicide when we should be doing all we can to honor and uplift our young people.

Religion teaches us to care about our neighbor. I’m asking you to care for our young people, and please vote no on bill SB 76.

Amy Hinrichs
Olathe, KS

Anna Hoard
anna.louise.hoard@gmail.com

SB 76: Requiring employees of school districts and postsecondary educational institutions to use the name and pronouns consistent with a student's biological sex and birth certificate and authorizing a cause of action for violations thereof.

Opponent
Written

March 4, 2025

As a Kansas educator, I write to the legislature in flabbergasted opposition to this bill, as it proposes egregious invasions of student privacy, creates onerous regulatory requirements, would negatively impact the learning environment, and has the potential to cause lasting harm to the students I teach.

Let us first address the privacy concerns SB 76 brings up. This bill places emphasis on “a student’s biological sex.” I am an elementary school teacher, not a medical professional. Who am I to assess “a student’s biological sex”? Perhaps more importantly, how exactly am I expected to do so? At best, this would require an invasion of a student’s personal privacy (if you have never worked at a school you may not know that it is *not* common practice to view the birth certificate of every student with whom one comes into contact). Am I expected to ask Kindergarteners, many of whom do not know their own last name, “and friend, so that I may address you with a state-approved pronoun, what is your biological sex?”

SB 76 proposes legal retribution for addressing a student with a pronoun or “name other than the name listed on the minor’s birth certificate.” What if an educator accidentally says the wrong name? This happens all the time. I have had as many as 500 student names to remember in one school year, and I have colleagues at larger schools who teach many more students than that each year. Inevitably, I switch two students’ names in my mind or learn one wrong the first time and struggle to correct it. I have a personal policy that I will do five push-ups when I address a student by the wrong name, but it is wildly unreasonable to suggest “injunctive relief, monetary damages, [or] reasonable attorney fees” simply because I learned a student’s name wrong or because I did not have ready access to a copy of their birth certificate (which, again, there is *no reason I should ever see*).

SB 76 is not intended to protect Kansas students from harm. This is made clear in Section 1 (e): “A person who is harmed by a violation of this section may bring a cause of action...” A *person*. Not a student, not a minor. This bill protects bullies. If a student made the very brave and vulnerable choice to ask their teachers to call them by a different name, or to use a specific pronoun when addressing them, it is *not* the student who would be protected from harm, but any onlooker who disagreed with that student’s right to self-determination, or who wished for that student to feel insecure and unsafe at school.

I have lost count of the number of students who have asked me to address them using a name that was nowhere near related to their name on my roster (again, I have never once seen a student's birth certificate). There are a variety of traditional, cultural, and developmentally-appropriate reasons why a student might make this request, and I have always been happy to grant it. If any student ever asked me to use a specific set of pronouns when addressing them, I would happily make that change as well. Ultimately, a student feeling safe, understood, and cared for in my classroom will always outweigh any presumptions I might make based on their appearance or how they are described on any document. If this bill were to become law, I would have no fair recourse but to refer to each of my students using gender neutral pronouns and their initials as listed on my roster (as I already do in much of my written communication about students, which is common practice to protect student privacy). This would not foster a classroom atmosphere of belonging or contribute positively to student learning outcomes.

SB 76 primarily presents itself as a way to regulate how employees of educational institutions address their students based on their "biological sex" (a scientifically dubious concept¹ that has become a favored topic among bullies of all ages). In fact, this bill attacks both students and educators in Kansas schools. Students whose gender is not immediately and broadly recognizable are targeted. Students who, for whatever reason (none of my or the state's business), use a name different than that on their birth certificate are targeted. Teachers who prioritize students' needs for acceptance and belonging are targeted.

SB 76 asserts that the "use of pronouns in classrooms, on campuses and elsewhere is not merely an administrative or ministerial act, but instead is a matter of free speech and academic freedom." On this point I actually agree. Kansas students deserve to exercise free speech in an environment of academic freedom. They deserve to inform their educators of the ways in which they prefer to be addressed in an academic setting. They deserve to bring their whole selves into the classroom.

This is a bad bill. It is poorly considered and morally wrong. I urge the legislators of the great state of Kansas to vote it down.

¹ Based on even the most conservative estimates, it is probable that one child who attends the small Kansas elementary school in which I teach is intersex, and at least three of my classmates from the Kansas high school of which I am a proud graduate were intersex, as were at least fifty-four of my classmates at the Kansas university I attended.

Veronica Holtz

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SB 76

WRITTEN ONLY

Opponent

3/4/2025

Chair Estes and Members of the Committee, thank you for taking the time to listen to my thoughts on SB 76. My name is Veronica Holtz and I am a voter in Wichita, KS. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76

Kansans should have the right to be called by their preferred name. Should a man named "Michael" not be called "Mike"? Should a woman named Joanna not go by "Jo"? What about when children have inherited a family name and prefer to go by a middle name? Where does it end? Why do you insist on pushing your views on others? This isn't a nanny state!

Thank you for allowing me the space to share my thoughts on SB 76. Again, I encourage you all to vote no on this bill, lest we all lose our collective minds.

M Horowitz

Email: Mhorowitz864@protonmail.com

SB 76 Enacting the Given Name Act

Opponent

Written

March 4, 2025

Dear Chairwoman Estes and Members of the Committee,

I am a Kansas voter, submitting this testimony in the hope that you do not allow SB 76 to pass.

This bill would place an enormous burden on Kansas teachers and school administrators. Addressing students by name is an effective way to let them know they are seen as individuals and more importantly that educators, as well as administrators and other school personnel, are invested in their success. SB 76 would create more hesitancy for school district employees to use students' names for fear of violating this bill and risking the legal action described in Section 1(e).

It is challenging to remember every student's name at the start of the school year. I am concerned that parents—including those who have always called their child by their middle name or a nickname that stuck--will forget to send in written permission to use that student's name, and names will trickle in throughout the first few months of a new school year, making the methods teachers use to memorize their new students' names less effective. This will detract from teachers' ability to concentrate on teaching and students' ability to get the kind of education they deserve.

I am also unsure how it would be possible to enforce the provision that “No employee of a school district, regardless of such employee's official duties, shall address a minor with a 1) pronoun or title that is inconsistent with the biological sex of such minor unless the employee has the written permission of such minor's parent; and 2) name other than the name listed on the minor's birth certificate, or a derivative of such name, without the written permission of the minor's parent.” Will parents be required to submit their children's birth certificates on an ongoing basis? What happens to minors whose parents are unable to locate their birth certificates after a recent move? Is every school teacher, para, janitor, and resource officer going to be given a complete listing of each student's name and sex? Will these changes be updated for all school district employees throughout the school year as written parental permission slips trickle in?

When I taught returning adult students, one of the first things I did was ask students to share the name they prefer to be called because it is easier for students—even as adults—

to feel comfortable and respected if they are addressed by the name they use elsewhere in their lives. I wanted my students to feel at ease, so they could better focus on learning.

Should this bill become law, I fear it would create many hours of additional, unnecessary work for teachers and school administrators and make Kansas schools less welcoming, less able to keep good teachers and administrators, and less effective educational environments.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
M. Horowitz

Hannah Howard

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SB 76

WRITTEN ONLY

OPPONENT

3/4/2025

Dear Chair Estes and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for taking the time to consider my views on SB 76. My name is Hannah Howard, and I am a resident of Merriam, Kansas, employed by a youth-serving nonprofit. I am reaching out today to urge you to vote NO on SB 76.

I'm deeply concerned about the overreach of this bill, and I believe it would impact teachers' ability to provide quality education to students. I'm particularly worried that this bill places an added burden on staff. Educators would feel fearful of being interrogated or falsely accused, all while trying to manage an already overwhelming workload. This bill is a significant overstep of government interference in the lives of teachers. Educators do not have time or money to be involved in litigation and instead need to focus on supporting the mental health and cognitive development of their students.

This bill would effectively divert time and resources away from crucial youth services. As someone currently working in a nonprofit that serves youth, I can attest to how severe the mental health crisis among students really is. We have children from all backgrounds coming to our programs struggling with extreme anxiety, and some expressing suicidal thoughts.

Additionally, state-level anti-transgender laws just like this increased past year-suicide attempts up to 72% among transgender and nonbinary youth (Journal: Nature Human Behavior). These young people already face significant disparities in health and education, including higher rates of violence and discrimination at school, when compared to their peers. I believe all children have a right to live full and abundant lives. Bills like this put young people's safety at high risk and directly lead to more suicide attempts.

In conclusion, this overreach of government power would hinder educators' ability to effectively do their jobs. If passed, it would divert vital resources away from student support services, ultimately harming every student.

I encourage you to vote no on SB 76. Thank you.

Mendy Hutson

Private Citizen

SB 76

OPPONENT

WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY

House Education Committee Hearing: Tuesday, March 4, 2025

Chairperson Estes and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony against Senate Bill 76.

I am a lifelong Kansan, an educator, and a family member and friend to transgender and non-binary individuals. It is with these perspectives in mind that I must express my strong opposition to this bill.

My entire life, as I've been an observer of Kansas politics, I understood that Kansans value freedom for families and communities to maintain local control and make decisions that are in the best interest of the community. It is a comfort that many Kansans enjoy, and take pride in, that we steer clear of national political chaos and gamesmanship in favor of steady and reasonable governing that aims to serve and respect all Kansans. Most Kansas towns, counties, and communities represent a variety of ideologies and values. We are not a monolith. In light of this shared value, I oppose SB 76 because it strips local schools, administrators, teachers, families, and school boards of their control within their communities to make decisions that are informed by best practices, research, and individual needs. This bill shifts control away from communities and those individuals who are directly impacted. In my school district, like many Kansas districts, there are already processes in place to help educators, students, families, and school leaders determine what is in the best interest of students on a case by case basis, and this bill interferes with local schools' stakeholders ability to implement best practices.

As an educator, I know from experience that students learn best when they experience acceptance and are respected as individuals. This bill creates unnecessary barriers to learning and creates an environment of hostility for students. This bill undermines teachers who receive all students without judgment and forces teachers to engage in a power struggle with transgender and non-binary students. Not only does this harm the transgender or non-binary student, but it harms all students as they observe a peer being disregarded and disrespected by an adult. This will either create friction between all students and the teacher, creating an environment that is hostile for learning, or it will model for students that it is acceptable to disrespect their transgender and non-binary peers, leading to further normalizing of bullying and discrimination.

This bill is problematic as it provides protections for those who misgender and deadname students but does not offer protection for teachers who opt not to engage in these dehumanizing practices and the resultant power struggle. This sets the stage for discriminatory practices in which some staff or students are given preference and protections that are denied others. My hope is that bills introduced to our legislature would be without prejudice or favoritism and

instead consider all students and educators. This bill does not meet that standard, nor could it, as these matters should be entrusted to the local community to work out, rather than a blanket piece of over-reaching legislation.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my perspective as an educator and as a concerned citizen.

Sincerely,

Mendy Hutson

FAITH JACOBSEN

PRIVATE CITIZEN

SB 76

WRITTEN ONLY

OPPONENT

3/4/2025

Thank you so much for reading my thoughts on SB 76 with you today. My name is Faith Jacobsen and I am a voter in Olathe, KS. I am writing you today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

I am an educator working in Overland Park, KS. When I first encountered a trans student it was 10 years ago and I didn't understand that they were giving me their pronouns as a life saving measure to them. In my ignorance I made a joke about it. However, pronouns and chosen name are a deeply personal thing related to a person's identity. And it is not abnormal for youth to explore their name and identity as they go through puberty and young adulthood.

A name is a deeply personal thing and one that can change over time.

My husband changed his name when he was 13 years old to avoid the name of a parent who had abandoned him.

My brother in law started going by a new name when he was in his teens out of personal preference.

Many people enjoy shortened forms of their names (Bill or Will for William, or Alex for Alexander). My brother was called Danny until his teen years when we insisted on being called Daniel. My father's name was Leland, but in his teen years he decided to instead be called Ted.

None of these names were on these family member's birth certificates. However they are a part of their chosen identity. I'm willing to bet that nearly everyone on this committee has someone in their family, or they themselves personally, go by a name that is NOT one that is assigned on their birth certificate.

In this bill it is specifically targeting trans students who are a vulnerable population in Kansas. I would like to point out the following pieces of information:

*Using gender-affirming pronouns and names is an EASY and INEXPENSIVE way to save lives of KS youth by reducing bullying

*In order to learn, a student must feel SAFE at school. By not allowing teachers to call the student the name they wish, the student will more likely to be bullied at school.

*This bill makes it TOO EASY to prosecute teachers - a profession that is already in desperate supply

*This bill openly targets a vulnerable population (trans youth) who should be PROTECTED under the law and this bill will cause lawsuits as a Title IX violation

*The resulting lawsuits will cost tax payers and the state of KS a lot of money

Thank you for hearing my testimony and thoughts on this bill. I encourage you to VOTE NO on the passage of SB 76.

Thank you.

Opposition Testimony for SB 76

For the House Committee on Education

February 28, 2025

Andrew Johannesen

Dear Members of the House Committee on Education,

I am writing this with the strongest opposition of SB 76.

For the past decades I have been on both sides of the classroom many times. Both as a pupil and educator, it has become tangibly clear that student success hinges on mutual respect between teacher and taught. This classroom respect is wholly contingent on politeness and following the basic wishes of both teacher and student.

This bill seeks to restrict language used by teachers to be dictated wholly by parents and birth certificates. This constraint directly undermines the capacity to build rapport with and earn trust of students. At a time when the fate of our public education hangs in the balance, undermining this trust demonstrates a distinct lack of care for the success of students.

Each relationship between student and teacher is personal and unique. **The decision of language to use regarding naming and pronoun use should be left to each individual relationship.** I speak on this as one who has had to work hard to forge bonds with students to help grow their success.

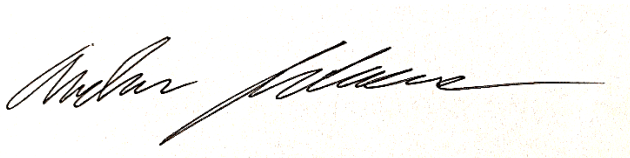
I am additionally concerned at the explicit invitation to legal action against educators based on their language. This is a deeply concerning restriction on the first amendment rights of citizens, regardless of the framing in the bill's introduction.

Finally, the majority of postsecondary education students are fully fledged adults independent of their parents. The proposition that these adults would need permission slips from their parents in order to *allow* speech of educators is bizarre and not in keeping with the mission of education.

I sincerely hope that you will do right by students and educators by opposing this bill.

Sincerely,

Dr. Andrew Johannesen

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrew Johannesen", is written over a light yellow rectangular background.

Feb. 7, 2025

Regarding Kansas Senate Bill 76

I am writing as a teacher and mother in opposition to SB76, as an individual and not representing any group or district.

This bill seeks to criminalize educators like me for using names and pronouns that students themselves request, that best match their sense of self. When I get to know my students each new semester, the first and most basic thing I learn is how to say their names.

What could be more simple, kind, and respectful than calling a person by the name they want to be called? Standing in the way of that separates me from my students and makes it harder for me to form positive relationships and effectively teach them. Students do not learn well from teachers they don't trust, and refusing to call someone by their name is a sure way to sabotage trust.

In addition, this bill references students' birth certificates, which schools don't even regularly collect - nor should we. We have plenty of other ways to establish students' names, ages, and addresses, which is what we really need. Making all school employees legally responsible for information

from students' birth certificates will unnecessarily expose these private documents to public review, creating other unrelated and unforeseen problems. In this age of rampant identity theft, why would we want to force school districts to manage and safeguard birth certificates?

Finally, as a mother, I am against this bill. Parents, colleagues, classmates, and other bystanders are not "harmed" when my child's teacher calls them by their preferred name and pronouns. Quite the contrary, my child is harmed when educators are too afraid to do so lest they be found liable. If you pass this bill, you will be creating a situation of fear and coercion in public schools. My child's teachers, counselors, aides, and others would likely be unwilling to use their chosen name and pronouns even if I give written permission, due to the risk of criminal charges and loss of licensure. This would create an environment of mistrust in what should be an educational safe haven. It would undermine our relationships with their educators.

Respectfully,

Elissa Jones, Topeka, KS

Lora Jost
lorajost@hotmail.com

SB 76 Enacting the Given Name Act
Opponent
Written testimony only
Hearing date: March 4, 2025

Dear House Committee on Education,

I urge you to **oppose SB 76**, the “Enacting the Given Name Act,” a bill that would protect teachers from calling a child by their preferred name. Public schools must prioritize the safety and wellbeing of children first, and research shows that LGBTQ kids suffer emotionally when their identities are not supported or respected by parents and teachers. There is no more basic way to respect a child’s dignity, identity, and autonomy than to call them by their preferred name. Children’s safety must come first, oppose SB 76.

Sincerely,
Lora Jost