

## Testimony in Support of House Bill 2428

**To:** House Committee on Education

**From:** Tim Davis, Ph.D., LSCSW

**Date:** 02/03/2026

**Re:** Support for HB 2428: Protecting Academic Freedom and Professional Integrity

Dear Chairperson Estes, Vice-Chair McNorton, Ranking Member Stogsdill, and Members of the Committee:

My name is Tim Davis. I am a Licensed Specialist Clinical Social Worker (LSCSW) and the Chair of the Department of Social Work at Fort Hays State University. I want to be clear that I am writing to you today as a concerned Kansan, a Clinical Social Worker, and an academic, not as a representative of the university.

I write in strong support of **House Bill 2428**. This legislation provides a vital statutory shield for institutions that are striving to maintain academic freedom, viewpoint diversity, and professional excellence in the face of increasingly prescriptive ideological mandates from accrediting bodies.

**The Context: Accreditation Overreach** Social work education is accredited by the Council on Social Work Education – Board of Accreditation (CSWE-BOA). While accreditation should ensure quality and competence, the CSWE-BOA’s 2022 Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards (EPAS) represent a mandate to adopt Critical Race Theory (CRT) as the single lens through which we design and deliver social work education.

These standards include an entirely new competency on Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ADEI) and a new section that prescribes activities programs must engage in. Further (and even more concerning), CSWE created a new standard for program design, requiring that: *“Social work programs integrate anti-racism, diversity, equity, and inclusion (ADEI) approaches across the curriculum. Programs provide the context through which students learn about their positionality, power, privilege, and difference and develop a commitment to dismantling systems of oppression, such as racism, that affect diverse populations. Programs recognize the pervasive impact of White supremacy and privilege and prepare students to have the knowledge, awareness, and skills necessary to engage in anti-racist practice.”* This requirement will effectively mandate that all social work programs teach critical race theory to the exclusion of every other perspective.

Programs are also now required to collect data on these activities and make ongoing data-driven changes to comply more fully with the standards. To maintain accreditation (something that programs must do for graduates to have the option to seek licensure in most states), social work programs must comply with the standards. However, the underlying presuppositions expressed in the standards, as they are currently written, smuggle in an ideology that is conformist, anti-academic, and counterproductive to training effective helpers.

While the concerns over these accreditation standards are many, the most pressing concern regarding these new mandates is the threat to academic freedom and inquiry. The CSWE-BOA is mandating that programs begin with an ideological framework and then filter everything through that perspective. For example, the research competency, Competency 4, outright states that social work research design, analysis, and interpretation must utilize an “Anti-racist and Anti-oppressive perspective.” Language such as this clearly prioritizes ideological commitments over the pursuit of truth. Additionally, these mandates extend to faculty behavior, requiring faculty to filter professional development and potentially even their lives outside the institution through the lens of ADEI.

**Why HB 2428 is the Necessary Solution.** While some argue that removing the accredited degree requirement for licensure is the best path forward, this would have a devastating effect of devaluing Kansas degrees in the national marketplace. Instead, we need legislative measures that place additional pressure on the CSWE-BOA and allow us to resist these counterproductive and destructive mandates. **HB 2428 is exactly that measure.**

- 1. Protecting the Curriculum.** By prohibiting institutions from compelling students to enroll in DEI-CRT-related courses to earn a degree, this bill allows programs to resist the CSWE’s mandate to “integrate” this specific ideology into every aspect of the curriculum. This bill does not restrict universities from presenting a wide range of perspectives; it allows all voices to be heard. It affirms that the purpose of social work education is to impart the knowledge, values, and skills required for students to become effective helpers.
- 2. Safeguarding Faculty Integrity.** The provision prohibiting institutions from requiring faculty to participate in “DEI-CRT practices” or pledge allegiance to these concepts for tenure or promotion is desperately needed. This bill protects faculty who approach their work from a heterodox position, ensuring they cannot be sanctioned for failing to conform to a specific political dogma, and will likely help to recruit new talent to the academy.

- 3. Clear Definitions.** The bill's definition of "DEI-CRT-related content"—including concepts like "systemic racism," "white supremacy," and "implicit bias"—is crucial. These are the exact terms used in the CSWE 2022 EPAS. By clearly defining these terms, the legislature removes ambiguity and empowers institutions to reject mandates that force these specific frameworks upon students.
- 4. Restoring Viewpoint Diversity.** Finally, the requirement for freshman orientation to focus on "free speech and viewpoint diversity" is laudable. University faculty and programs should seek to be as politically neutral in their teaching as possible, focusing on viewpoint diversity as a key element of the faculty ethos. This bill reinforces that mission, ensuring universities remain places of humble and open inquiry, practicing constructive disagreement as an essential skill for academic discovery, rather than centers for ideological indoctrination.

Without HB 2428, accreditation is being weaponized to demand conformity to a specific 'anti-racist' perspective at the expense of traditional academic inquiry. Recently, the CSWE - BOA sent a letter to all of the accredited social work programs in the nation. This letter explains that programs are permitted to remove the ideological mandates centered around CRT from their curriculum, but only if there are state laws prohibiting its inclusion. This action provides further evidence that the CSWE-BOA cares more about advancing a political ideology than promoting effective social work education. Without this legislation, we are left defenseless against these illiberal mandates. The power of accreditation will be used to demand allegiance to ADEI, effectively subordinating the historical Telos of the academy to a vapid and shallow ideological indoctrination.

HB 2428 gives Kansas institutions the legal backing to resist these overreaching mandates. It protects our ability to train social workers who are critical thinkers and effective helpers, capable of serving *all* Kansans, regardless of their political alignment. Thank you for the opportunity to present these issues to the committee. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have questions or need additional information.

Respectfully,



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