

STATE OF KANSAS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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DR. MEGAN D. STEELE
51ST DISTRICT

February 1, 2026

Subject: Proponent Testimony for HB2428

To: Honorable Chair Estes and Education Committee Members

Our universities should exist for one primary purpose: to educate. Not to advance political ideologies, not to sort students into categories, and not to prioritize administrative agendas over academic excellence. Kansans expect excellence from our institutions of higher learning. What many of us have seen instead is discouraging and helps explain why confidence in higher education has eroded.

Too often, universities have shifted their focus toward diversity, equity, inclusion, belonging, and social justice initiatives at the expense of rigorous scholarship and open inquiry. When ideology replaces evidence and identity outweighs individual effort, students lose. DEI frameworks tend to move barriers around rather than remove them, defining people by group labels instead of character, work ethic, and achievement. That approach undermines fairness and weakens the foundation of equal opportunity.

At the same time, our universities must align with the real needs of Kansas. Agriculture, engineering, healthcare, business, and the skilled trades power our state's economy. Higher education should be equipping students with practical skills, strong reasoning abilities, and the character necessary to lead in their communities.

If we want to address the educational challenges facing our state, we need to return to the basics: merit, accountability, academic excellence, and a clear focus on preparing the next generation to build strong families, strong communities, and a strong Kansas economy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Megan Steele', written in dark ink.

Representative Steele

P.S. See attached slide show.