

**Opponent Testimony on HB 2428 – An act concerning postsecondary educational institutions  
Kerry Gooch, Board Member, Kansas Black Leadership Council, info@kansasblc.org**

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

Thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on HB 2428.

The Kansas Black Leadership Council is a non-profit, non-partisan organization that sees to unite leaders, organizers, and community members to advocate for just policies, to nurture Black leadership, and to advance racial equity statewide. We oppose HB2428.

HB 2428 does not prohibit universities from offering courses related to diversity, cultural competence, or related topics. Instead, it prohibits those courses from being required for graduation in nearly all degree programs. As a result, students in fields such as education, social work, healthcare, and other public-facing professions could complete their degrees without ever being required to examine perspectives, life experiences, or systemic factors different from their own.

This matters because graduates of these programs will serve Kansans from every background imaginable. Teachers will educate in increasingly diverse classrooms. Social workers will support families with vastly different lived experiences. Medical professionals will treat patients whose outcomes are directly affected by cultural understanding and trust. Preparing students academically while prohibiting institutions from requiring preparation for these realities does not serve Kansas well.

HB 2428 also raises serious workforce and economic development concerns. Kansas is actively working to retain young people, attract employers, and compete for large-scale investments in a diversifying national and global economy. Employers consistently emphasize the importance of a workforce that can collaborate effectively across differences. Restricting the ability of higher education institutions to require coursework that builds those competencies sends a conflicting message about Kansas' readiness to compete.

The bill further prohibits course content related to concepts such as cultural competence, social justice, allyship, and discussions of race or identity. At the same time, it requires coursework on American institutions, founding documents, and landmark Supreme Court cases. It is difficult to understand how students can meaningfully study those cases, including decisions like *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka*, without engaging honestly with the historical and systemic realities those cases addressed. Omitting that context risks producing an incomplete and misleading understanding of our own history.

HB 2428 does not promote academic rigor or freedom. Instead, it limits the ability of institutions to determine what preparation is necessary for professional competence in today's Kansas. It substitutes legislative restrictions for educational judgment, with real consequences for students, employers, and the communities those graduates will serve.

For these reasons, the Kansas Black Leadership Council respectfully urges the Committee to oppose HB 2428.

Thank you for your time and consideration.