



To: House Committee on Elections
From: Erica Andrade, Chief Program Officer, El Centro
Date: January 27, 2026

Re: HB 2448 – Oppose

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in strong opposition to HB 2448, a bill that would require Kansas driver's licenses to display an individual's citizenship status.

El Centro has served Latino and immigrant communities in Wyandotte and Johnson Counties for nearly 50 years. Our mission is to strengthen communities and improve the lives of Latinos and others through educational, health, wealth, and economic opportunities. Central to this mission is the reduction of barriers that prevent individuals and families from fully participating in civic and community life.

HB 2448 directly undermines this goal by creating a system that publicly labels individuals based on citizenship status. This approach echoes a **troubling history of assigning symbolic “scarlet letters”** to certain groups, marking them as different and inviting scrutiny, discrimination, and harm. Kansas should not move backward toward policies that single people out based on who they are or where they were born.

It is important to note that in Kansas, undocumented individuals are already unable to obtain state-issued driver's licenses or identification cards. As a result, HB 2448 does not address an existing gap or problem in policy. Instead, it creates a new and unnecessary distinction among individuals who are lawfully present in the United States but are not natural-born or naturalized citizens.

In essence, this bill would single out Kansans who have legal status—such as lawful permanent residents, refugees, asylees, and individuals with temporary protected or humanitarian statuses—by visibly marking them on a document that is routinely used in daily life. A driver's license is presented to employers, banks, landlords, schools, healthcare providers, and law enforcement. Requiring citizenship status to be displayed invites profiling, increases the risk of discrimination, and erodes trust in public systems.

For the communities El Centro serves, trust is foundational. Many families already approach government systems with fear and caution, shaped by past experiences of exclusion or harm. Policies like HB 2448 will further discourage individuals from engaging with public institutions, seeking



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assistance, or reporting crimes—outcomes that weaken public safety and community well-being for all Kansans.

We are deeply concerned that this bill prioritizes symbolic signaling over practical benefit, while placing real and lasting harm on immigrant and mixed-status families. Citizenship status is neither necessary nor appropriate information to display on a driver's license, and its inclusion serves no public safety purpose that cannot already be met through existing verification systems.

El Centro stands firmly against legislation that normalizes the public labeling of individuals and fosters a culture of exclusion. Kansas is strongest when it affirms dignity, privacy, and equal treatment under the law for all who live, work, and contribute to our state.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the committee to oppose HB 2448.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

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