

Greetings committee,

My name is Matthew Obold-Geary, and I am a lifelong Kansas resident.

I am in opposition to HB 2426, which would define the term “gender” in Kansas law to mean biological sex at birth and require state agencies to invalidate and reissue vital records and driver’s licenses to reflect that definition.

While I understand the bill’s sponsors may intend to clarify statutory language, the proposed definition and the administrative mandates that would accompany it raise serious concerns for Kansans, particularly for transgender, nonbinary, and gender-diverse residents:

One. Invalidating existing identity documents causes harm and confusion.

Requiring the Division of Motor Vehicles and Vital Statistics to invalidate and reissue driver’s licenses and birth certificates not only imposes significant administrative costs but also creates needless stress for individuals who have lawfully amended their documents under current processes. This could disrupt employment, housing, travel, and access to medical care for people whose lives depend on accurate identification.

Two. The bill fails to consider the well-being of vulnerable communities.

Transgender and nonbinary Kansans already face disproportionately high rates of discrimination, harassment, and barriers to healthcare. Legislation that undermines their legal identity contributes to stigmatization and can exacerbate mental health challenges. Bills like this send a message that their identities are not respected or recognized under state law.

Three. Practical problems and legal uncertainty.

This bill could create confusion in the legal system, law enforcement interactions, and public services when state documents are altered retroactively. It is unclear how this proposal would impact federal identification requirements, interactions with other states, or situations where legal gender markers play a role in access to services.

Four. Reissuing documents on a large scale imposes unnecessary costs, prompting policymakers to consider fiscal responsibility and the efficient use of taxpayer resources. Reissuing official documents on a large scale would require additional staff time, system updates, and potential reprinting costs. At a time when many Kansans are concerned about budgeting priorities, directing resources toward a bill with no demonstrated public safety or administrative benefit seems unwarranted.

For these reasons, I urge members of the Committee to oppose House Bill 2426 and instead prioritize legislation that respects Kansans’ dignity, protects all residents from discrimination, and avoids unnecessary burdens on individuals and state agencies.

Thank you for your time and consideration.