

LOUD LIGHT CIVIC ACTION

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Loud Light Civic Action
Opponent Testimony of HB 2426
For the House Judiciary Committee

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Chair Humphries and members of the Committee,

Thank you so much for the opportunity to provide testimony today. My name is Melissa Stiehler, and I serve as Advocacy Director of Loud Light Civic Action, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that supports and builds the civic engagement and leadership of young people in Kansas. We represent over 16,000 Kansans, including supporters in every House and Senate district across the state. Loud Light Civic Action unapologetically supports the LGBTQ+ community, including their right to live a happy, healthy life that is free from government interference in their ability to be themselves in public life. It is with these values that Loud Light Civic Action strongly opposes HB 2426.

Concern: HB 2426 will put into law inaccurate definitions relating to gender that will be used to discriminate broadly and create unsafe environments for trans, intersex, and gender diverse individuals.

Sex is currently defined in Kansas law as “the biological indication of male and female in the context of reproductive potential or capacity, including sex chromosomes, naturally occurring sex hormones, gonads and nonambiguous internal and external genitalia present at birth,” which is inaccurate. A strict binary definition that is at odds with scientific and natural reality creates unnecessary legal tension. For instance, it is as common to be intersex as it is to have red hair¹. Further codifying what could best be qualified as middle school biology class definition to also apply to the legal enforcement of our bodies in public life is a foolish pursuit.

Showing your ID shouldn't be a dangerous act, but this bill would make it so. Transgender people face extensive discrimination and hate-based violence just for being themselves. You need legal documents to vote, to get a job, go to school, or even get a library card. Laws that put transgender people at more risk of hate based violence for engaging in everyday actions that require showing their ID means that transgender Kansans could miss out on these important parts of life in order to protect their personal safety.

Concern: This bill is based on lies and misinformation, feeding into hateful stereotypes that leads to real violence. This bill and those like it are based on the extremist belief that trans women are predators— men dressing as women to get into bathrooms. Despite what propaganda influencers have to say on the matter, there is no evidence that transgender people are more likely to commit violent crimes² and in fact, a majority of both sexual assault³ and mass shootings⁴ are perpetrated by white, cisgender men. The reality is that trans people are over 4 times more likely to be victims of violent crime than the rest of the population⁵. This violence has only continued to rise in recent years, with hate crimes based on gender identity rising 340% since 2015⁶.

1. Cleveland Clinic. Intersex: What Is Intersex, Gender Identity, Intersex Surgery. Cleveland Clinic. Published July 19, 2022.

2. Tulp S. FACT FOCUS: No “incredible rise” in transgender shooters. AP NEWS. Published March 30, 2023.

3. United States Sentencing Commission. Sexual Abuse. United States Sentencing Commission. Published October 23, 2019.

4. Check RF. Fact Check: Majority of US mass shooters are cis men, not transgender or non-binary people. *Reuters*.

5. Dowd R. Transgender people over four times more likely than cisgender people to be victims of violent crime. Williams Institute. Published March 23, 2021.

6. Federal Bureau of Investigation. Hate Crime in The United States Incident Analysis. Federal Bureau of Investigation Crime Data Explorer. Published January 15, 2025.

The national trend of legislating based on hateful propaganda is alarming enough that globally renowned scholars have issued a warning this week that the U.S. is in early stages of genocide against trans Americans⁷. Dr. Elisa von Joeden-Forgey, founder and executive director of the Lemkin Institute for Genocide Prevention, said in an interview earlier this week that she believes the U.S. is now in the “early-to-mid stages of a genocidal process against trans and nonbinary and intersex people.” Among the experts who join her in this warning is Dr. Gregory Stanton, former president of the International Association of Genocide Scholars who, on behalf of the State Department, drafted the United Nations Security Council resolutions that created the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda. In regard to the current political landscape of anti-transgender legislation, Dr. Stanton said, “I think what they’re doing here is they’re trying to destroy a gender group. And so I do think it’s genocidal. I think that the objective here is literally, physically to destroy this group.”

Concern: This bill does not protect women and girls and instead weaponizes civil rights against a vulnerable population. There is nothing in this bill that actually codifies more rights or protections for women. This bill isn’t about sports or healthcare. It’s certainly not about things that actually benefit women and families like affordable childcare, paid parental leave, or housing affordability. Instead, it takes rights away from trans, intersex and gender diverse people. By weaponizing civil rights terminology, proponents are hoping to eradicate trans and gender diverse people from gendered public spaces like bathrooms or domestic violence shelters.

This bill would also open everyone up to gender policing and scrutiny, including folks who are not transgender. In other states, laws like what is proposed in HB 2426 have led to cisgender women with short hair or who are unusually tall being turned away from a domestic violence shelter or kicked out of a women's bathroom—or even open them to threats of violence⁸.

This bill would harm public safety by increasing unreported crime and lack of cooperation with police and courts. When a witness or victim of a crime is required to expose themselves to additional risk of harm just by showing an ID that does not represent them, it interferes with law enforcement's ability to effectively do their job and has a chilling effect on public safety. This, of course, leads to increased risk from crime for all of us.

For these reasons, Loud Light Civic Action strongly urges members of this committee to oppose HB 2426, and urges the legislature to please, leave transgender Kansans alone. The Kansas Legislature has been tasked with the job of representing the will of our people, who overwhelmingly do not support the broad discrimination policies⁹ that are included in this bill. Thank you all for your time and I hope you take my testimony into consideration.

7. Bragman W. Experts Warn U.S. in Early Stages of Genocide Against Trans Americans. Lemkin Institute . Published January 5, 2026.

8. Yurcaba J. Minnesota teen says server forced her to prove her gender in restaurant bathroom. NBC News. Published August 12, 2025.

9. Parker K, Horowitz J, Brown A. Americans’ Complex Views on Gender Identity and Transgender Issues. Pew Research Center. Published 2022.