

Opponent Testimony of SB 76  
For the Senate Education Committee  
Monday, February 10, 2025  
Elise Flatland  
Policy Analyst, Equality Kansas and on behalf of my family

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on behalf of Equality Kansas and my family.

My name is Elise Flatland. My husband and I have four children, two of whom are transgender. I am deeply opposed to Senate Bill 76. As a parent, my primary responsibility is to protect my children, support them, and help them feel valued and understood. Unfortunately, Senate Bill 76 directly contradicts those values and threatens my children's dignity and mental well-being.

As a parent, I believe I have the fundamental right to support my children's gender identity. Our family works continuously to ensure our children feel safe and respected for who they truly are. My children's names and pronouns are a reflection of their true selves—identities they have spent years discovering. Allowing teachers, school staff, and other students to ignore this and use incorrect names and pronouns isn't just a violation of my children's rights—it's harmful. Deadnaming and misgendering students isn't just disrespectful and hurtful—it's also a violation of their right to privacy. Why is someone else's right to free speech more important than another person's right to privacy? This bill sends a message to my children and all transgender children that their identity is invalid, that their truth is something to be dismissed, ignored, or even punished.

This bill would enable other students to harass and bully transgender students, and it would prevent teachers from stepping in to protect them. Bills like this send a clear message to adults and children alike that transgender people should not exist. We're seeing legislative priority placed on bills that harm a small minority, instead of passing bills that would benefit the majority of Kansans. Are my children's names and pronouns really the most important issue?

Transgender children have become an easy target for politicians. But there is nothing political about my children's existence. Transgender people have always existed and will continue to exist—whether in supportive environments or in hostile ones. This bill is just another act of disrespect toward my family and our beliefs. The message it sends to transgender students is that their identities aren't worthy of respect in the very spaces where they should feel safest—at school.

This bill doesn't just isolate and stigmatize transgender students—it also poses serious mental health risks. For children already at high risk for depression, anxiety, and even self-harm, being unsupported or invalidated by teachers, peers, or adults can worsen those outcomes. This bill threatens the emotional well-being of an already vulnerable group of children.

As a parent, I ask you to consider the emotional toll this bill would take on children like mine. Imagine being told every day that the name you've chosen for yourself, the pronouns that reflect

your true identity, are invalid. Imagine the pain and confusion of having your classmates and teachers refer to you in ways that don't match who you are.

This bill is not concerned with the welfare of our children. Instead, it places the value of free speech over the well-being of children. It allows and encourages bullying and harassment. It undermines children's right to be themselves, to express their identities, and to receive the support they need in a safe, nurturing educational environment.

Legislators are already attempting to strip my children of their health care and their right to bodily autonomy. Do you really need to take away their names and pronouns, too? Do you know how humiliating it is to have to publicly discuss my children's private medical information and identity because of this legislation? Do you know how appalling it is that this is the second time in less than two weeks I've stood before a committee asking them to not get between a child and a parent?

I urge you to vote against Senate Bill 76. Let's protect all of our children and ensure that schools remain a place where they can grow, learn, and be respected for who they truly are.

Sincerely,

Elise Flatland