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Chuck@KansasCatholic.org
www.KansasCatholic.org
Phone: 785-227-9247
Cell: 316-708-5350

KANSAS STATEHOUSE OFFICE
Kansas Catholic Conference
204 SW 8th Ave.
Topeka, KS 66603

Written PROPONENT testimony in favor of SB 76. AN ACT concerning education; relating to employees of school districts and postsecondary educational institutions; enacting the given name act to require such employees to use the name and pronouns consistent with a student's biological sex and birth certificate; authorizing a cause of action for violations thereof.

TO: Madam Chair Senator Erickson and members of the Committee on Education

FROM: Chuck Weber, executive director, Kansas Catholic Conference

DATE: February 10, 2025

Madam Chair and members of the committee,

My name is Chuck Weber, and I serve as the executive director of the Kansas Catholic Conference, representing the Catholic Bishops of Kansas. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony as a WRITTEN PROPONENT to SB 76.

“Who do you say that I am?”

This is question of identity is one that that many children are asking—of themselves and in their relationship with others, including in the public-school setting. It is not a new question and has been asked for centuries. In fact, Jesus asks this question of his disciples as recorded in the Gospels of Matthew (16:15), Mark (8:27), and Luke (9:18).

The answer is important. There should be no confusion about the identity of our children, most especially as it relates to their education in our public schools.

The Catholic Church believes that parents are the first and primary educator of their children. There are times, though, where parents feel inadequate in their ability to provide the full scale of education, they want their child to receive. When this occurs, parents rely on trusted sources, such as public schoolteachers, to assist in their child’s education. The expectation is that working alongside the teacher in partnership, the child will receive the best education and learning environment possible.

When schoolteachers, or other educational professionals, hide information about a child from the parents, most especially on an issue as basic as one's identity and the name one is to call them, this becomes a severe disservice. Teachers are placed in a situation where they are breaking the trust of the parent and create a wedge between child and parent. This is not only unhealthy but can be disrespectful and dangerous.

Parents should be able to fully trust those they have chosen to partner with in educating their children. Especially with something as simple and straightforward as calling the child by the name gifted to them by their parents.

It is a great disserve to our educators by placing them in conflict between the child and parent when teachers are forced to deceive parents about such a basic interaction as the name of a child.

When professional educators are placed in such an untenable situation calling a child by the name preferred by their parent, it begs the question: "what else could they be keeping from the parents"?

Passing SB 76 would ensure parents maintain their trusted partnership with those they have entrusted to help educate their child.

We encourage you to support SB 76. Thank you.

If you have any questions concerning this process, please feel free to contact Mr. Gerald "Chuck" Weber, Executive Director, at (316) 708-5350.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Chuck Weber". The signature is cursive and fluid, with the first name "Chuck" being more prominent than the last name "Weber".

Gerald C "Chuck" Weber

316-708-5350

Chuck@KansasCatholic.org