

Donna Ackley
dtackley@hotmail.com
Private Citizen
2/7/2025

Opponent

Chairman Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on SB 76 with you today. My name is Donna Ackley and I am a voter in Douglas County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76"

Every Kansas student has the right to be called by their gender-affirming name and pronouns. This law would be a violation of students' privacy, and put their safety at risk. This is a politicized attack on our teachers and other educational professionals such as professors, councilors, principals, librarians and more.

Once again, I thank you all for hearing my thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of SB 76. Thank you.

ISABELLA AHMED
Lalabellaboo27@gmail.com
PRIVATE CITIZEN
2/7/2025

OPPONENT

Members of the Committee, I thank you for allowing me the space to share my thoughts on SB 76. My name is Isabella Ahmed, I am a voter in Sedgwick County, Wichita. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

Every Kansas student has the right to be called by their gender-affirming name and pronouns. This law would be a violation of students' privacy, and put their safety at risk. This is a politicized attack on our teachers and other educational professionals such as professors, councilors, principals, librarians and more.

I would like to once again thank the Committee for hearing my plea, and I hope you will join me in realizing the harmful consequences of this bill. I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of SB 76. Thank you.

Angela Ferguson Allard
angela@austinferguson.com
Private Citizen
2/10/2025

Opponent

Chairman Erickson and Members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony opposing SB76. My name is Angela Ferguson Allard and I was born and raised in Haven, Reno County, Kansas. I am writing today to ask you to vote NO on SB 76.

I am taking the time to write because this issue is personal to me and my family. I have a gay nephew in Kansas who has a trans partner. These are outstanding, beautiful individuals who are residents, voters, and contributing members of your State. This proposed legislation will cause harm, denigration, bullying, and abuse from school employees and students. This law would be a violation of students' privacy, and put their safety at risk because their interests in privacy and safety are closely related to their rights to be referred to by names and pronouns consistent with gender identity.

Respecting students' names and pronouns is necessary to protect transgender and gender diverse students from bullying and discrimination at school.

When teachers or staff mis-gender or deadname a student, it opens the door for the student's peers to do the same and creates an environment where the student is more likely to get bullied or harassed.

As an attorney, I can tell you that our Courts do not need a floodgate of frivolous lawsuits. The Courts are already overburdened. The damages section in this bill is overly broad and paves the way for litigation based on overhearing conversations. The bill does not require the person who sues for damages to be involved in the conversation at all, which allows for anyone overhearing a conversation to bring litigation.

Even if an education professional wanted to follow this law perfectly, it would be nearly impossible for them to protect themselves from the risk of litigation. There is no effective means of ensuring every school employee and student has the knowledge of every student's name and sex listed on their birth certificate, nor should there be.

The total unenforceability of this bill may lead to excessive administrative burdens on our local schools and higher education institutions, both in creating systems for attempting its enforcement and in costs defending the institutions and its employees against frivolous lawsuits.

Politicians should stop this invasion into classrooms and schools across the state and into the lives of students and families they don't know. This reckless use of government as a bludgeon

would undermine the ability of educators to do their jobs and create healthy learning environments.

Thank you for your time and attention to this testimony. I encourage you all to vote no on SB 76.

Christy Allen
christy@christyallen.net
Private Citizen
2/6/2025

Opponent

"Chairman Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on SB 76 with you today. My name is Christy Allen and I am a voter in Johnson County/Lenexa. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76"

I am writing to express my strong opposition to SB 76, which seeks to ban teachers and school employees from addressing students by their chosen names and pronouns. This bill is not only harmful to students, but it also places an unreasonable burden on educators and staff, creating an environment of fear and discrimination in our schools.

Every student deserves to feel safe, respected, and supported in their learning environment. For many transgender and nonbinary students, being addressed by their chosen name and pronouns is a fundamental part of their well-being. Denying them this basic dignity can lead to increased anxiety, depression, and a diminished sense of belonging, all of which negatively impact their academic success and overall mental health. Schools should be places of learning and encouragement, not centers of exclusion and harm.

Furthermore, this bill goes beyond just prohibiting teachers and school employees from affirming a student's identity—it also allows anyone to sue school staff simply for using a student's chosen name or pronouns. This opens the door to frivolous and malicious lawsuits that could overwhelm educators with legal threats and financial burdens. It is wholly inappropriate to create a system where teachers and school staff—who are already underpaid and overworked—are subjected to potential lawsuits for treating students with respect and dignity. This bill would have a chilling effect on educators, forcing them to navigate an environment of fear rather than focusing on their essential work: teaching and supporting students.

Additionally, the proposed legislation contradicts the principles of parental rights that many lawmakers claim to support. Parents, not the state, should be able to work with educators to determine the best way to support their children in school. This bill inserts the government into deeply personal decisions and prevents teachers from working in good faith with students and their families.

Rather than punishing teachers and harming vulnerable students, lawmakers should focus on policies that promote inclusion, understanding, and academic success for all students. Our schools should be places where every child feels welcome, not institutions where their very identities are up for debate.

I urge you to oppose SB 76 and stand up for the rights of students, teachers, and parents to foster a respectful and supportive educational environment. Please reject this harmful and unnecessary legislation.

"Once again, I thank you all for hearing my story and thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of SB 76. Thank you."

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Good afternoon Kansas Senate. My name is Mack Allen, and I am a female to male transgender college student in Kansas. I have been a frequent LGBTQ rights advocate in the past, I will certainly not stand by while the legislature threatens to strip away Kansas' rights. The bill in question- SB76, jeopardizes the 1st Amendment right of Free Speech not only of transgender students, but it also affects their cisgender teachers. The language of this bill is unquestionably vague, especially with respect to college students. What is the policy for adult aged college students? What about students who pay for their own school? Will they have to request "parental permission?" The Kansas Senate is forgetting that "college-age students" are adults with basic Constitutional rights.

Kansas, are we going to wait like a sitting duck while the 20 gauge of fascism takes its grip on our state? The state government has become far too powerful, and while transgender people lose their rights, the legislature is creating a blueprint to rescind yours, too.

I urge the Kansas Senate to take a careful look at this bill before passing it. This bill could ultimately lead to the loss of all rights for transgender people- including adults, as well as provide the base for an assault on other marginalized communities.

Yours in Service,

Mack Allen

SYLVIE ALTHOFF
sylvie.althoff@gmail.com
PRIVATE CITIZEN
2/10/2025

OPPONENT

Members of the Committee, thank you for hearing my testimony regarding SB 76. My name is Sylvie Althoff, and I am a teacher living in Douglas County. I am writing to urge the committee in the strongest possible terms to vote NO on this bill.

As a teacher, I know from years of experience how critical my role is in the healthy upbringing of my students. I take my responsibility incredibly seriously, typically working long hours outside of the school duty day and investing no small amount of my own money in giving my students the best school experience possible. Yet if this bill is made into law, I have no idea how I will be able to do my job without risking the constant threat of legal action. My students are entitled to exactly the same level of respect owed to any other American—they deserve to be referred to in a manner in keeping with their identity, full stop. That standard is applied without complaint to cisgender students every single day, honoring their chosen names without needing to consult their birth certificate or legal counsel. Holding students of diverse gender identities to a different standard nothing less than base bigotry, isolating individuals of a minority group and subjecting them to humiliating treatment. That is not how I was instructed to teach, and it's not what's best for any student in my classroom. Contrary to what you may have heard from some proponents of this bill—all of whom are paid consultants not residing in Kansas, it must be restated—medical and educational research overwhelmingly supports transition for positive mental and physical health outcomes. This process is slow, carefully considered, and begins with minor social changes including identifying with a different name or pronouns. Know that if you attempt to compel teachers to uphold this law, you ask them to forego any true support of their students, surrendering in our mission to improve their educational outcomes and social and emotional growth in favor of upholding rigid gender norms not reflective of the diverse reality of human existence. Trans, nonbinary, and gender-nonconforming individuals have always existed and will always do so; SB 76 will serve no function but to browbeat teachers into bullying those individuals at a critical moment of growth.

I trust you to vote according to the prevailing medical and educational expertise and vote no on the passage of SB 76. Doing otherwise would inarguably harm young Kansans. Thank you.

Anthony Alvarez
anthonyalvalon@gmail.com
Private Citizen
2/10/2025

Opponent

Chairman Erickson and Members of the Committee. My name is Anthony Alvarez and I am a voter in Wyandotte County, Kansas City. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76"

I believe that SB 76 is not in the best interest of the state. I would like to begin by acknowledging how difficult SB 76 will be to enforce. The courts in Kansas are already overwhelmed, it is ridiculous to burden them with court cases regarding the names and pronouns of students. SB 76 intends to effect state institutions like K-State or the University of Kansas (of which I am a student), making it affect students and faculty that hail from multiple states and countries, again opening up the state of Kansas to pointless litigation. Personally, I also think it is irresponsible for the state to encroach on its state employees' speech, that this bill will harm students, and will cause unnecessary confusion.

Once again, I thank you all for hearing my story and thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of SB 76. Thank you.

Cathy Anderson
catherineanderson@duck.com
PRIVATE CITIZEN
2/6/2025

OPPONENT

Dear Members of the Kansas Legislature Committee on Education, I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts on SB76 with you. My name is Cathy Anderson and I live in Newton, KS. I write today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

Having read the text of the bill, I think legislators should vote against it for two reasons: 1) it antagonizes members of the public against each other, by specifically prioritizing the free speech rights of one group over another, and 2) it puts an impossible burden on public school professionals to verify the birth name and sex listed on all students' birth certificates, and to make sure all school staff and students are properly using that information, in order not to be sued for allowing use of a different name and/or pronoun, even when requested in writing by a student's parent.

I am also concerned that this bill violates the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution and will involve Kansas in expensive and time-consuming litigation, perhaps up to the U.S. Supreme Court. As a taxpayer, I prefer not to have my money spent that way.

Thank you for hearing my thoughts on this bill. I encourage you all to vote no on the passage of SB 76.

Rev. Lora Andrews
lora@rootschurchkc.org
Private Citizen
2/7/2025

OPPONENT

Chairman Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you giving me time to share my thoughts on SB 76 with you today. My name is Rev. Lora Andrews and I am a United Methodist pastor, a lifelong Kansan, a voter in Wyandotte County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

Chairman Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you giving me time to share my thoughts on SB 76 with you today. My name is Rev. Lora Andrews and I am a United Methodist pastor, a lifelong Kansan, a voter in Wyandotte County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

I have had the privilege of pastoring transgender children, college students, and adults throughout my career, many of whom have changed their names or pronouns in the time that I have known them. What I have experienced is greater confidence, greater participation in the larger community, and greater joy.

In my faith tradition of Christianity, some of our strongest leaders of the faith in the Bible had name changes that represented a new day in their lives—that name came with greater confidence, greater participation in the larger community, and greater joy. Leaders like Abraham, Sarah, and Paul would not have passed the test of this bill without needing to be called by a name that was no longer representative of where they were on their journey.

My parishioners who are transgender with name and pronoun changes are doing so as an act of faith—they are being who God created them to be. New names in my faith mean transformations and following God. To take that away from them, because of opposition against transgender rights, is also opposition to the faithfulness of my parishioners.

This will limit their education and it will limit teachers' ability to educate. Please vote no and keep the priority of Kansas on the education of our children and young people, and not on a bill like this that no one is asking for.

Once again, I thank you for listening to my perspective as a pastor and Kansan on this bill, and I encourage you to vote no on the passage of SB 76. Thank you.

Sara Askew
sarabrooke@gmail.com
Private Citizen
2/10/2025

Opponent

Dear Chair Erickson and Committee Members,

I am writing to voice my opposition to SB 76.

This bill will cause true harm to students and our educators. Please stop the culture wars, going after our most vulnerable populations. There is such a small transgender population in Kansas, yet our legislature is spending so much time crafting bills that will cause them mental and physical harm. Kids have chosen what name to be called at school much longer than this latest war on trans rights has been taking place. The ability for anyone to sue if they merely hear someone using different pronouns or a different name is ludicrous. We cannot truly think that that person would have harm caused to them by hearing a different name or pronoun. The harm done will be to our vulnerable populations who are not having their rights respected. Please work to make the lives of Kansans better and stop fighting these culture wars.

Thank you for taking time to listen to my point of view. In closing I ask you to vote no on SB 76.

Thank you,
Sara Askew
Wichita

Anna van Asselt
ae.vanasselt@gmail.com
Private citizen
2/10/2025

Opponent

Chairman Erickson and members of the Committee, thank you for giving me time to share my thoughts on SB76 with you today. My name is Anna and I am a voter in Johnson County, Prairie Village. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on SB 76.

As an individual with a doctorate in psychology with a specialization in children and adolescents, I fear the harm this bill would cause is insurmountable and heartbreaking. Simply being referred to by their identified pronouns and names saves lives. Mental health supports are already dangerously hard to find. As research indicates, by passing this bill, you are risking the lives, real lives, of children and taxing an already over run mental health system, which will ultimately place these children at higher risk for death by suicide.

Once again, I thank you all for hearing my story and bringing humanity and nuance back into the picture. I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of SB 76. Thank you.

ILEXA AXELROD
ilexaxel@gmail.com
PRIVATE CITIZEN
2/6/2025

OPPONENT

Chairman Erickson and Members of the Committee,

I appreciate your willingness to hear my thoughts on SB 76 with you today. My name is Ilexa Axelrod and I am a voter in Johnson County. I am writing today to urge the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

I work in the mental health field and this bill is extremely alarming. According to the Suicide Prevention Resource Center, suicide was the second leading cause of death for ages 10-14 and the third leading cause of death for ages 15-24 in 2020.

It is known that transgender and non-binary individuals have heightened risks for suicide attempts, suicide completions, and poor mental health. This bill will only perpetuate punitive and harmful academic environments for educators and students who do not have accepting caregivers; however, most importantly, this bill would likely lead to more suicides.

NPR published an article in 2024 referencing a study by The Trevor Project that showed a 72% increase of suicide attempts in the years following anti-transgender legislation - similar to this bill that is being presented.

As a sister whose younger brother has made suicide attempts, I urge you to vote against this bill. As a mental health clinician who works with non-binary and trans teens at the partial-hospitalization level, I urge you to vote against this bill.

Thank you for listening. I am hopeful you will all consider to vote NO of the passage of SB 76.

Ashley Balza
ashleybbalza@gmail.com
Private Citizen
2/10/2025

OPPONENT

Chairman Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on SB 76 with you today. My name is Ashley Balza and I am a voter in Sedgwick County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on SB 76.

Respecting a student's chosen pronouns is not just about words -- its about acknowledging their identity, dignity, and right to self-expression. This bill will send a devastating message that student's true selves are not valued or accepted in the places they come to learn. It will create an unwelcoming and hostile learning environment where students feel unsafe, unseen, and unheard. This will rob our students from a crucial support system and force them to suppress their identity. PLEASE stop attacking our trans, gender fluid, and non-binary youth and young adults! This is not what Kansans want. We want you to use our tax dollars to help create MORE inclusive environments , including schools, for the youth and young adults of Kansas. This is a complete government overreach and is continuing to degrade the trust your constituents once had in you. We are already in a huge deficit with educators in Kansas, this will only continue to drive them out, as you are making it impossible for them to show up and actually support their students. I will remind you again that you serve these students you are so dead set on attacking. This bill will also give way for an increase in bullying and harassment, as it signals that disrespecting gender identity is acceptable. It will contribute a culture of intolerance that will affect the entire school community, and violate the fundamental human right to dignity and respect. Please listen to us!

Once again, I thank you for your time and encourage you all to vote no on the passage of SB 76. Thank you.

Opponent Testimony of SB76

For the Senate Education Committee

February 10th, 2025

Mary Alice Barger

School Counselor and member of Kansas School Counselor Association

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition of Senate Bill 76 on behalf of my students that I work with on a daily basis. The fact that this has come to be a bill that is being heard before the Committee on Education when there are so many important issues facing education today indicates that those in positions of leadership have their sights set on ensuring very specific voices of our population are silenced instead of heard.

This bill is a targeted attack on a small population of youth who need, more than anything, to feel supported and seen. It is true that schools are institutions of education, but they are also intended to be safe havens for those who are in need. This is why we are mandated reporters, correct? To ensure the safety of those who enter through our doors? Well, validating someone's identity is another form of safety.

Furthermore, we are told that student mental health is a priority for us. Post Covid, we all saw anxiety and social struggles on the rise. There has been an increase in school avoidance, and we've worked tirelessly to ensure we are getting students back into the buildings so that they can learn. If we are not allowed to validate these students for who they are when they enter our buildings, we will go back to seeing more struggle to get people through the doors.

According to a peer-reviewed study by The Trevor Project, "States that passed anti-transgender laws aimed at minors saw suicide attempts by transgender and gender nonconforming teenagers increase by as much as 72% in the following years." This is such a small portion of our population, and we are risking their mental health by not doing the bare minimum of referring to them in a validating way. If the intention is to cause harm to a small portion of our youth population, then this does exactly that. There are no protections offered by choosing to refuse to allow a student autonomy.

This also could lend itself to the bullying and further ostracization of these students. If we are unable to teach students to be respectful to others by treating them the way they would like to be treated, we are setting ourselves up for adults who have little consideration for others. This creates a lack of community and compassion, and I can't imagine that this is the goal.

I speak for my students when I say that I vehemently oppose this bill.

Judi Barkema
jabarkema@gmail.com
Kansas Citizen
2/10/2025

Opponent

Chairman Erickson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my thoughts on SB 76. My name is Judi Barkema and I am a voter in Lenexa. I'm writing today to ask the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

Part of growing up is figuring out who you are and who you want to be in adulthood. There are a lot of moving parts in that learning process. Am I an athlete? Am I studious? Do I like science? Is art my thing? Am I organized? Is messy a better fit for me? And in today's world, some youth are asking if their birth gender is the gender that fits for them. All of these choices are very personal. No one can decide for someone else.

Teachers and educational professionals are specifically trained to help youth navigate the process of figuring out who they are and who they want to be. If a youth wants to experiment with using different pronouns or names, their free speech rights protect their ability to experiment. And we need teachers and educational professionals to support our youth as they explore their options.

SB 76 will harass youth, teachers, and educational professionals. The damages included in the bill will create a hostile environment for youth needing space to explore their identity and the educational professionals trained to support all our youth. I personally know young adults who are better citizens because they have found the identity and pronouns that fit who they are.

In addition, as a Christian, I am called to love my neighbor. Not just the neighbor that looks and acts like me, but everyone. SB 76 is the opposite of loving my neighbor.

A NO vote for SB 76 supports the development of youth as good citizens, supports our teachers and educational professionals, and lives up to the Christian call to love all our neighbors.

Please vote no on SB 76. Thank you.

Tom Barker, Ph.D.
Educator / Parent
Senate Bill 76 Opposition - Written Testimony Only
Senate Committee on Education
Email Address: tomwbarker@gmail.com

February 7th, 2025

Chair Erikson and Senate Committee on Education Members:

My name is Tom Barker and I am writing as a public school educator in opposition to Senate Bill 76 (SB 76). I have had the privilege to be a public school teacher for the past twelve years. Having completed my Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction at the University of Kansas, I choose to work in the K-12 setting instead of further working in higher education. I could rave on for hours about the trials and challenges of being a public school teacher, while also noting many of the successes I have seen. Simply put - I love my job and glad that I have found my calling. I am also grateful for my son's public school education and the many opportunities it has allowed him to have.

My opposition to this bill is that I believe it threatens the well-being of students. As an educator, students come into my classroom with a variety of backgrounds and needs. My job is to simply meet them where they are at and educate them the best I can. Over the years I have had several students who were transgender and use a pronoun or name that may be different then assigned at birth. I hope that by using the name and pronoun that they wish to be used in my class helped them to feel more comfortable and allowed me to build a relationship of trust with them. These relationships are key to being a successful learner in the classroom. I have seen students whose parents have struggled with their student's gender dysphoria and have often had school be the only safe place that reinforces their self-worth.

Additionally, I oppose this bill because it allows for harassment of transgender students by their peers. I find it completely unacceptable that even with a parent's written consent, this bill would allow fellow students to harass and bully a transgender student by not using their preferred name or pronouns, as those who choose to target transgender students cannot be punished. This would create serious issues within a school environment and lead to the decrease in school being a safe place for all students.

Lastly, adolescence is already a difficult time for students as they try to figure out who they are and what they want their roles to be in our society. Transgender youth already have a lot of struggles already in coming to terms with who they are despite societal norms. As research has indicated, like that published in *Nature Human Behavior*, states that have implement anti-transgender laws typically show an increase up to 72% in suicide rates for those between the ages of 13 and 17. I believe that enacting this bill as state law would lead to a similar effect

in Kansas and I cannot sit idly with the threat that this may put more pressure on a former, current, or future student to question their self-worth.

I hope that you will think about these youth and their self-worth as you consider this bill and vote in opposition to it.

Weston Barnes
25barnes@usd294.org
My Organization
2/10/2025

OPPONENT

Thank you Members of the Committee, for allowing me the time to share my thoughts on the matter of SB 76. My name is Weston Barnes from Decatur County. I am writing to encourage the committee to vote no on SB 76.

I oppose this bill because it is a violation of rights for transgender people. We all have the right to addressed the way we want to be. I feel that this a very discouraging step for our state and nation, and I am afraid. I am afraid that if these rights are violated, the rights of people will continue to be violated. I am a man, but I am a gay man, so I know how it feels to be discriminated against and bullied for something I cannot control. This is policing people's personal lives. We are all people, and as people we should be able to have the freedom to identify ourselves how we choose. I feel that if we continue down this destructive and belittling path, all of our rights will be placed on the chopping block.

Once again, I thank you for listening to my voice and thoughts on this bill, and I hope that you will take what I have said into consideration. I encourage and implore you to vote no on the passage of SB 76, so that our future can be preserved. Thank you.

Savannah Barraza
simplysavannahlauren@gmail.com
PRIVATE CITIZEN
2/6/2025

OPPONENT

Chairman Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for giving me the opportunity to share my thoughts on SB 76 with you today. My name is Savannah and I am a voter in Johnson County, in Prairie Village, KS. I am writing to you to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

SB 76 is incredibly dangerous and I believe prioritizes political ideology over the well-being of our students. This bill strips transgender and non-binary students of their right to be fully seen and known for their authentic selves. These students should have full autonomy over their self-expression and should feel safe to show up in the world the way they want to. Having several family members work as educators, this infuriates me knowing they are being put in the terrible position where they have to disregard a student's identity. This isn't just about pronouns. This is about treating every human with DIGNITY and caring about the fundamental rights and mental health of our students. Research shows that affirming a person's chosen identity significantly reduces risks of anxiety, suicide, depression, etc. Educators should be empowered to create safe and INCLUSIVE and supportive learning environments for all students regardless of the way they've chosen to express their gender. This bill will create the opposite and will result in hostile spaces where students feel unseen and unsafe. If we truly care about education and the students we are guiding into their adulthood, we should be working to protect them-- not legislating their identities out of existence.

Once again, I appreciate you all for taking the time and listening to my thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you strongly all to vote no of the passage of SB 76. Thank you.

Opposition Testimony for SB 76

For the Senate Education Committee

February 10th, 2025

Katherine Barrow

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony to SB 76. I live in Shawnee, Kansas. I care deeply about the dignity, respect, and safety of kids, teens, and adults in Kansas. SB 76 is part of a shameful, ongoing attack on ALL Americans. If we have to look to legislators to determine our freedom of identify and expression, we continue down the long and dangerous decent into fascism. Your mask is off and we see you. We will not stand for this. Trans people and gender fluid people have always existed and will always exist. This bill does not change anything about society, norms, or nature. It is a blatant attack on the physical, emotional, and psychological wellbeing of Kansas youth. Supporting LGBTQIA youth is suicide prevention. SB 76 is also an attack on teachers, school staff, and parents who are just trying to educate youth in a safe, supportive, and dignified environment. Your constituents beg you to mind your own business about our bodies and our freedom of expression. Consult medical and mental health professionals when drawing your conclusions about childhood development and psychological wellbeing. If you want to protect Kansas youth and school staff, we implore you to start with what is actually harming kids - gun violence – by supporting gun violence prevention policies that have been proven to effectively reduce violence in our communities.

Opposition Testimony for SB 76

For the Senate Education Committee

February 10th, 2025

Laura Barrow

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony to SB 76. I live in Roeland Park, Kansas. I care deeply about the dignity, respect, and safety of kids, teens, and adults in Kansas. SB 76 is part of a shameful, ongoing attack on ALL Americans. If we have to look to legislators to determine our freedom of identify and expression, we continue down the long and dangerous decent into fascism. Your mask is off and we see you. We will not stand for this. Trans people and genderfluid people have always existed and will always exist. This bill does not change anything about society, norms, or nature. It is a blatant attack on the physical, emotional, and psychological wellbeing of Kansas youth. Supporting LGBTQIA youth is suicide prevention. SB 76 is also an attack on teachers, school staff, and parents who are just trying to educate youth in a safe, supportive, and dignified environment. Your constituents beg you to mind your own business about our bodies and our freedom of expression. Consult medical and mental health professionals when drawing your conclusions about childhood development and psychological wellbeing. If you want to protect Kansas youth and school staff, we implore you to start with what is actually harming kids - gun violence – by supporting gun violence prevention policies that have been proven to effectively reduce violence in our communities.

Amy Bartak
amy.e.bartak@gmail.com
Private Citizen
2/10/2025

Opponent

Dear Chairman Erickson and members of the committee, thank you for giving me time to share my thoughts on SB 76 with you today. My name is, Amy Bartak and I am a voter in Overland Park, Johnson County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

Every Kansas student has the right to be called by their gender-affirming name and pronouns. We call individuals by whichever name they choose (Richards go by Rich or Dick, Andrews go by Andy, Drew, Jennifers by Jen, Jennie, and the list goes on).

Schools and universities are about growth and learning. They [schools] have a legal obligation to respect every student's gender identity, even before students are able to legally update their names or gender markers. Children are searching for their belonging and to be seen as who they are; schools should be fostering that sense of community, learning and exploration.

By calling the person what they want to be called - pronouns, name, etc. we are seeing them as who they are which is a great sign of respect. I feel this bill is a gross overreach into citizens private lives and is highly unenforceable in practice.

Politicians should stop this invasion into classrooms and schools across the state and into the lives of students and families they don't know. This reckless use of government as a bludgeon would undermine the ability of educators to do their jobs and create healthy learning environments.

Once again, thank you for hearing my thoughts on this bill and I encourage you to vote no of SB76. Thank you.

Anne Bauer
alhbauer@hotmail.com
Private Citizen
2/7/2025

Opponent

Chairman Erickson & Members of the Committee, thank you for taking the time to consider my testimony as a constituent & concerned citizen & parent. My name is Anne Bauer and I am a voter in Wyandotte County, Kansas City (66109.) I am writing today to ask the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

As a parent in the state of Kansas, I know how important safe & supportive schools are to the future of our state. I believe that SB 76 strongly undermines this intention and will have devastating effects on the safety & wellbeing of students across the state of Kansas.

Schools have a legal responsibility to respect every student's gender identity, regardless of whether they have yet had the opportunity to legally update their names or gender markers. Denying students the right to use their gender-affirming name or pronouns at school may be a violation of Title IX and the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution. Courts across the nation have consistently ruled that refusing to use someone's gender-affirming name and pronouns constitutes gender-based harassment, which infringes upon their constitutional rights. By ensuring that schools respect these basic rights, we can create an inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students.

I respectfully urge you to consider the serious implications of any law that would violate students' privacy and compromise their safety. A student's right to be referred to by names and pronouns consistent with their gender identity is deeply tied to their privacy and protection. By respecting students' identities, we help safeguard transgender and gender-diverse students from bullying and discrimination in schools. When teachers or staff misgender or deadname a student, it sets a dangerous precedent for their peers, making it more likely for the student to experience harassment and emotional harm. This is not just a matter of respect -- it is about ensuring a safe and supportive learning environment for every student.

This proposed bill represents a politicized attack on our dedicated educators and educational professionals, including teachers, professors, counselors, principals, librarians, and others who work tirelessly to support our students. The damages section of this bill is overly broad, paving the way for lawsuits based on overheard conversations, even when the individual bringing the lawsuit was not involved in the conversation at all. This opens the door to unnecessary litigation and makes it nearly impossible for educators to protect themselves, even if they are trying their best to comply with the law. It is unrealistic and invasive to expect every school employee to be fully aware of every student's name and sex as listed on their birth certificate, nor should it be. The unenforceability of this bill could lead to excessive administrative burdens on our local schools and higher education institutions, costing both time and money defending against

frivolous lawsuits. Politicians should stop this intrusion into classrooms and schools across the state and out of the lives of students and families they do not know. This reckless overreach would only undermine the ability of educators to do their jobs and create safe, healthy learning environments for all students.

Thank you again for your time, listening to the significant concerns of parents, citizens & voters in your state. These children are ALL our children. Please vote NO on the passage of SB 76.
Thank you.

Trace Beard
trace.e.waugh@gmail.com
Private citizen
2/10/2025

Opponent

I am Trace Beard and special education educator in a low incidents classroom. I am a voter from Garden City in Finney county. I am writing today to ask you to vote no on SB 76.

This bill would harm not only trans students but also any student who uses a different name. We have many different cultures in Garden City and many of those students have "Americanized" nicknames. With this bill those students will be required to use a name they no longer use. I have had a student in the past not want to use the name on their birth certificate because it was a name they shared with their abusive parent and they did not want to be reminded of them at all.

I hope you take care and I encourage you to vote no on SB 76. Thank you for your time.

February 7, 2025

Opposition Testimony for SB 76
For the Senate Education Committee
February 10, 2025
From Kim Belanger
Manhattan, Kansas

Dear Chair Erickson and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on SB 76.

I am a cis, white woman from Manhattan, Kansas. I offer this information so you know that I am not so different from you. I also hold two masters degrees and work as a teacher of gifted education, working with some of the brightest and most sensitive students in our schools. When I began teaching middle school, many of my students were becoming extremely uncomfortable in their own bodies and genders, and struggling to learn because they felt a traumatic response to not being allowed to be themselves. They were extremely uncomfortable, sensitive, and withdrawn. When some of them finally had the courage to ask to be called by their appropriate pronouns or names that were not aligned with their birth gender or names, they suddenly relaxed, felt respected, became just a bit more confident, and were ready to learn. I noticed a visceral response to the respect that they received just from the simple act of calling them their names and pronouns.

Brain science tells us that people can't learn when they are protecting themselves through a trauma. Being denied the extremely basic right to live your life as the person you know yourself to be is the most personal kind of trauma. Being stripped of this right by people who are afraid of you is even worse. How could you possibly take this right away from these fragile humans? The trans children and adults I know are the most kind and sensitive people. They are not the monsters that they are being framed by the news. They do not want to assault women in bathrooms or flaunt their status- they merely want to be themselves. How can we take that from them?

I strongly oppose SB 76 for the safety and dignity of our trans children and hope you will reconsider.

Thank you,

Kim Belanger
Gifted Education Facilitator
USD 383
Manhattan, Kansas

Rebekah Bell
rebekah.bell0617@gmail.com
Private Citizen
2/6/2025

Opponent

Committee Members,

Thank you for your time and consideration. My name is Rebekah Bell I live in Sedgwick Co. Kansas. I am writing today to encourage a NO vote on SB 76.

I oppose SB 76 as an unnecessary and ineffective tool which overreaches into a safe space for our children.

Nicknames, preferences, and desired names are pretty bottom of the barrel for things Kansas educators need to be concerned about. School is somewhere ideally kids are able to be themselves, to expand their education, learning, and discovery. Names are a part of that identity that comes as we grow and mature.

For example: my given name is Rebekah, but I go by Reba at work. In serve our country's Veterans a Registered Nurse in an ICU setting. My preference for my name at work —for me is because it's easier to remember, easier and quicker to spell, and who doesn't love Reba?

We all should be able to go by what we choose, what sounds right to us, for whatever reason, as should our kiddos.

Thank you again for your time, and your "NO" vote on SB 76.

Fred Bellemere
fbellemere@gmail.com
Private Citizen
2/6/2025

Opponent

Chairman Ericson and Members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts on SB 76 with you. My name is Fred Bellemere and I am a voter in Lawrence Ks. I am writing today to encourage you to vote no on SB 76.

SB 76 is nothing more than an effort to suppress one groups freedom of speech and expression. The reason would seem to be only to appease those who feel offended by an individuals life choices. I do not believe this sort of law has any place in this state or country. There seems to be no real method of enforcement here allowing for nothing but one's word against another's. Seemingly most obvious this bill will harm our youth. One could possibly find a way to educate a child in a way that exposed him to only like minded people who all looked alike and had the same beliefs. One should ask what effect will this have on a young person as they move into the real world where they will have to work alongside many different people, from different places, likely with different priorities and ideas. Passing this bill will only subject our state to additional legal costs with zero benefit.

Thank you once again for taking the time to review my written testimony. I encourage you all to vote no with respect to the passage of SB 76. Thank You

Opposition Testimony for SB 76
For the Senate Education Committee
February 10, 2025
Kim Bellemere

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on SB 76. I'm writing to ask you to set aside your work on SB 76 and stop the attacks on trans students and their teachers.

Recent research has shown that states which have passed anti-trans legislation saw a 72% increase in suicide attempts among transgender youth (The Trevor Project, 2024). Trans youth are already a vulnerable population, they do not also need to face attacks by the people who are supposed to protect them.

As the parent of a transgender person, I know the impact that bullying and discrimination can have on trans people. I also saw how important it was for my child's teachers and school administrators to accept and support her. I have no doubt that their acceptance made a lasting impact on her mental health and how she saw herself as a valued member of our society.

It is not the state's job to police people's gender and names. Please stop this unnecessary and harmful legislation.

Charissa Bertels
charissa.bertels@gmail.com
Private citizen
2/6/2025

Opponent

Chairman Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on SB 76 with you today. My name is Charissa Bertels and I am a voter in Riley County, Manhattan, KS 66502. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76

As a teacher it concerns me that a bill with such wide sweeping consequences, even based on overheard hearsay, could put teachers at risk of being sued. This is an outrageous overreach. Continuing to attack trans or non-binary students, their families and teachers is a gross misuse of your/our time and I ask that you stop immediately and put your efforts elsewhere for things Kansans actually want, including better healthcare and higher paying jobs, etc.

Once again, I thank you all for hearing my story and thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of SB 76. Thank you.



Opponent Written Testimony Only of SB 48
For the Senate Education Committee

February 7, 2025
Kelly Bielefeld
Superintendent, USD 259 - Wichita Public Schools

Chair Erickson and members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in opposition of SB48, amending K.S.A 2024 Supp. 5170. Accountability for improving student academic performance is a goal that both the Kansas Legislature and school districts agree upon, particularly the Wichita Public Schools. Our local board made student outcomes the primary focus of its 2024-2029 Strategic Plan. Every board meeting now has mandatory updates on the results of measures put into place to improve academic achievement. Accountability, including taking responsibility for current outcomes and making appropriate adjustments is a positive, actionable step in a continue cycle of improvement. Punishment is about enforcing rules with sanctions. The accreditation process was not designed to be used as a “stick” to punish school districts who do not meet an undefined amount of “significant” progress on one imperfect measurement that takes no other circumstances under consideration.

Kansas statute charges the Kansas State Board of Education with the accreditation of schools, a process that provided official recognition of the school having met a set of standards based on a rigorous accreditation model known as the Kansas Education Systems Accreditation (KESA). Private schools are not required to participate in this process. The new vision of KESA is to meet the demands of today’s employers, moving away from a “one-size fits all” system that relies exclusively on state assessments, but calls for a more student-focused system that results in higher academic skills AND employability and citizenship skills. Through KESA, schools now focus on results and processes necessary to improve student learning.

“Accredited” means schools have provided conclusive evidence of growth in student performance and intentional, quality growth process. Thus, a system already exists to qualify schools making gains as “accredited.” If some KESA measures are not met, schools are qualified as “conditionally accredited or not accredited.” Further, KESA provides the framework to evaluate the systems but cannot provide the resources to overcome the student barriers to being successful within those systems. That is the local board’s role to evaluate the most impactful barriers to improvement and put resources in place to mitigate those barriers where possible. In Wichita, with over 80% free and reduced meal students, concentrated poverty is the single most impactful barrier to overcome. Losing our accreditation as punishment for the poverty barrier limiting “significant” improvement will not solve the challenges to student achievement caused by poverty.

If K-12 schools are making any progress on state assessments or can show other data to support that students are improving academically, current accreditation should not be threatened. We respectfully ask the committee to not advance this bill that sets forth more punishment than accountability, ignores the KESA process, and contains vague improvement requirements that do not fit the circumstances and challenges of individual school districts and their student populations.

Opponent of SB 76
For the Senate Education Committee
Monday, February 10, 2025
Kristen Blackton
Private Citizen

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 76. I am urging the committee members to vote **no** on SB 76 as it **infringes** upon the first amendment free speech rights of students and teachers and seeks to make classrooms unsafe for LGBTQ+ students.

I taught middle school English for ten years at a parochial school. During my time in the classroom, I met hundreds of students, some of whom identified as LGBTQ+, and a few of whom were transgender. At the beginning of one of my final years in the classroom, one of my students asked me to call them by a different name than what was printed on their birth certificate. So, I did. The result? That student felt **welcome** and **affirmed** when they were in my classroom. They smiled and shared their talents and dreams with us. In other words, the result was that a student was able to learn and grow because they felt safe. This is exactly what teachers seek to do: support students so that they can grow in confidence and skills and begin to reach their full potential.

If SB 76 becomes law in Kansas, there will be negative ramifications for both teachers and students. As someone with extensive time spent in a classroom, I know how disruptive it will be for teachers across this state to carry the anxiety of potentially facing a lawsuit for simply supporting and affirming a student. SB 76 also undermines the spirit of unity and solidarity that good teachers establish within their classes throughout the year. Specifically, the damages section in this bill is too broad and opens the path for litigation based on overhearing conversations as it does not require the person who sues for damages to be involved in the conversation at all. How could one bring together a classroom community when in constant fear that treating a student with respect and care will lead to someone else in the school suing you? During a time when we are facing a shortage of qualified teachers, this will be a **deterrent** for many people thinking of entering the education profession.

As a parent, I teach my daughter about respect and care for others. Using a student's preferred name and pronouns is one example of doing just that. Every Kansas student has the right to be called by their gender-affirming name and pronouns. Not only is this a matter of empathy and respect, there are also legal obligations to be considered. Denying students the right to use their gender-affirming name or pronouns at school may constitute a violation of Title IX and the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution.

To close, I want to emphasize that this bill is, ultimately, unenforceable. As a middle school teacher, I saw upwards of 50 students a day, and many high school teachers see upwards of 100 students a day. It is impossible for every teacher to know every student's name and sex that is on their birth certificate. **Every year**, when it came time for my eighth grade students to graduate in May, I learned that a student went by a name that was not on their birth certificate because they went by a nickname, a middle name, or sometimes, a completely unrelated name. Calling them by this different name had ***no bearing*** on anyone's ability to learn. It just made that student feel good to hear the name or nickname they preferred. There will be more burdens, both administratively and financially, placed on an already burdened education system if this bill is to pass.

I encourage the members of the committee to vote **NO** on SB 76.

Thank you for your time,

Kristen Blackton
Shawnee, KS

Opponent of SB 76
For the Senate Education Committee
February 10, 2025
Rebecca Boehm
Kansas Educator

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee:

My name is Rebecca Boehm and I am a teacher in the state of Kansas. I became a teacher for all the cheesy reasons teachers usually list; to help children grow into the best adult version of themselves, to help them find out about the world and the things that interest them and bring them joy and to leave the world a slightly better place. While these reasons may sound lofty and trite, they are true. Watching my students learn and grow is the thing that keeps me going on days when the same children are driving me insane. Getting emails and visits from them years later gives me a reason to go to work even on days when my bed feels extra soft and warm. Knowing that they've turned into happy adults with fond memories of my teaching in kindergarten or first or second grade reminds me why I love my job.

I recently had a student and family that I will always remember fondly and I hope I helped to have a great start to their educational experience. In April I was told that one of our incoming kindergarten students was gender fluid. They had told their parents that they felt like they were a boy sometimes and a girl at others. Knowing the atmosphere of welcoming and belonging that we strive to create in our school, I requested that this student be placed in my classroom so I could help to make their first year in school a great one. I spoke to their parents and got to know their family at kindergarten orientation, summer kindergarten playdates, and events held in the lead up to the school year starting. I found that my students' parents had done a lot of reading and research about how best to handle their child's needs and feelings. After a lot of thought, they had decided to let their child pick the pronouns they would use each day. We agreed with input from the child that everyday I would greet them at the door and ask what pronoun they would use that day he, she or they. I warned the parents that sometimes I might make a mistake and use the wrong pronoun or say something in a way that I could have said better. I was very nervous about making a

mistake, making this child feel different. I was also concerned about other parents and students' reaction and how I would explain this to a group of 5 years olds.

The truth is it wasn't anywhere near as big of a deal as I thought it would be. When I introduced my student to the class at the beginning of the year I said that some days they might be feeling more like a girl and I would use the word she and some days they might tell me they felt like a boy and wanted to use the word he. There was none of the teasing or confusion that I feared might happen. I did make mistakes and say the wrong pronoun. My student and their family never made a big deal when this happened. They seemed really appreciative that I would make the effort to make their child feel welcomed and equal to all my other students. That was all my student really wanted. To be able to say "this is who I feel like I am today" and to be accepted for who they were.

Throughout the year I watched this extremely bright child form friendships with their peers, grow as a reader, a mathematician, a writer, and a thinker. They showed other students how to read with expression from beginning chapter books and never made anyone else feel bad that they couldn't read like that too. They learned comprehension skills from others to go along with their amazing reading. They told funny stories and made silly faces and art projects and played at centers and did all the things that make kindergarten an amazing way to start school. They also grew up by about three inches, though it seemed like a foot looking back from the end of the year.

I truly believe that my student was able to do and learn all these things because they were in a safe environment and felt comfortable to be themselves. They could just be who they wanted to be in the moment without worrying about what anybody else would say or think about it. Because it truly wasn't a big deal. None of the kids teased them. None of the parents called to complain about the student in their child's class with the changing pronouns. The sky didn't fall, it didn't disrupt learning or spark outrage. It just allowed a five year old to be themselves. Just how they wanted to be at that moment.

In thinking back on my student and what happened that year I wonder how it would have been different if SB 76 was in place. If I had been forced to call my student by the pronoun on their birth certificate instead of he, she or they as the child chose. I wonder if I would have had the chance to learn how funny they were or see the faces they could make. I wonder if they would have read so proudly with all that expression for other children to hear. I know that I wouldn't have learned nearly as much from

them about how to make my classroom a place where all children feel wanted and accepted as I did that year.

So I am asking you to please vote against passing this bill and forcing teachers to go against parents' and students' wishes when it comes to their child's pronouns, names and identities. This law would make our schools a much less welcoming place for no reason other than it is currently politically expedient to deny children and families the ability to choose for themselves who they want to be.

Judith Bond
Judybond32@gmail.com
Private Citizen
2/6/2025

Opponent

Chairman Erickson and Committee Members. My name is Judith Bond and I am a voter in Johnson County, Olathe Kansas. I ask the Committee to vote No on SB 76.

As a Christian, I know Jesus wants us to love everyone. He would not want us to hurt children and teachers as passage of this bill would do.

Thank you for listening.

Andreas Braz
andreasbraaaa@gmail.com
Private Citizen
2/10/2025

OPPONENT

Chairman Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to share my thoughts on SB 76. My name is Andreas Braz, and I am a voter in Douglas County. I urge the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

Blocking the passage of SB 76 matters to not only myself, but a large amount of folks that I care about. Pronouns should, at the very least, be honored because it takes little to no effort to implement. We update our phones every other month with no hesitation, so what is stopping us from updating our language? Things change so rapidly and for the most part, it is for the betterment of the greater good. Right now, it is so vital to provide a foundation for the validity of people who just want to live their lives in peace. This is just one small piece of the tapestry of human rights, which everyone is entitled to.

Thank you once again for listening to my story and my perspective on this bill. I respectfully urge you to vote against the passage of SB 76. Thank you.

To those considering passing Senate Bill 76 I implore you to not. At age 10 my child, named Charlotte at birth, said to me "I need you to call me Hunter." I said, "Why Hunter?" and they said "it is not too feminine and not too masculine." So we changed how we addressed them and they flourished. They were more happy and confident than we had seen in a long time. I was told by their fifth grade teacher is that they were required to use birth names and pronouns on report cards. I tried to understand this. When the first report card came with the name I had stopped calling them and the pronouns that no longer matched it was like a punch to the stomach. I realized that this practice was harmful and unnecessary. My child was able to be called their true name and pronouns in every other setting including doctor's offices and childcare settings. Why would education be different? I went to the administrator and said "This report card hurt me and will cause harm to my child. I will be throwing it away and unable to show them this." Within a week the teachers were asked to use preferred names, that parents approved, for all documentation. The teachers were relieved to be able to use the name that affirmed and protected the child and the harm caused by calling someone a name that does not fit them was paused.

Not every child has a parent or guardian who can advocate for their true name and pronouns. I promise you that the harm to children and adults caused by calling them a name or using pronouns that do not match who they are is not worth any power of moral high ground that may be gained with a bill like this. Teachers, administrators, and school staff have a responsibility to educate and protect students and should not be punished for calling someone by the name that helps them be themselves. Our energy would be much better spent in educating on accepting differences and supporting educators who work every day to lift students up.

Thank You,
Allison Brewer
She/her
Parent to a trans child
Educator
Resident of Topeka, Kansas

Sarah Bricker
bricker.sarah82@gmail.com
Private Citizen
2/6/2025

Opponent

Chairman Erickson and Members of the Committee,

My name is Sarah Bricker and I am a voter in Decatur County, Oberlin. I was born and raised in Kansas. I have worked in the Kansas public schools my entire life. I am writing today to urge the committee to vote NO on SB76.

I oppose this bill on a very personal level. This directly impacts our family because one of my children is transgender. We have seen first hand the importance of respecting a person's name and pronouns. When we first notified our school district of our child's request for a change of name and pronouns, we noticed a huge change in our child. I remember his teacher coming to me and telling us how shocked she was at our child's instant boost of confidence and self-esteem. The support our school has offered has been amazing and we are so thankful our child has the support he needs to feel safe, secure, and normal.

This bill, SB76, is violating the First Amendment Freedom of Speech. It is also a violation of Title IX and the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution. It violates my child's right to privacy and equality. It puts, yet another target on their back, from our politicians who are trying to erase the existence of my child and Kansas children like him. Kansas transgender youth deserve their freedom of speech and expression, just like everyone else. They deserve an education where they are treated with respect and decency. They deserve a school that is safe and welcoming to all. They deserve going to schools where they feel safe, seen, and heard, so they can learn and grow just like their peers.

Thank you for considering my story and thoughts on this bill and I urge you to vote NO on the passage of SB 76.

Gerald Briscoe
gjb7917@nyu.edu
Private Citizen
2/10/2025

Opponent

Chairman Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on SB 76 with you today. My name is Gerald (JJ) Briscoe and I am a voter in Gardner. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76

I stand before you to share my personal story, one that embodies the reality faced by many LGBTQ+ students in our state, particularly in light of the proposed SB76 bill that seeks to ban the use of gender-affirming names and pronouns for minors in schools and higher education.

Growing up in Kansas, especially during my high school years, I constantly questioned whether the people around me—especially my teachers—would accept me for who I truly was. Each day, I wondered, "If they knew the real me, would they hate me?" This thought haunted me as I navigated my educational journey. As a student, I was terrified of what would happen to my future if the very people who held my grades, my potential, and my future in their hands were to start hating me, simply because of something I couldn't change about myself—something that was integral to who I was.

I remember moments of fear, but I also recall a sense of hope when I saw a teacher proudly display a symbol of inclusion. It reminded me that some educators truly understand the struggles LGBTQ+ students face and are there to support us. Teachers should not be restricted from uplifting students' identities, as this legislation would force them to fear litigation simply for using the proper names and pronouns of their students.

I understand firsthand the pain of feeling invisible. I remember how much I craved to be seen and validated. This bill will erase the possibility of that validation for Kansan students. It will take away the opportunity for students to feel the acceptance that I, at one point, feared I could never have.

SB 76 undermines our ability to feel safe and respected in schools, and it further isolates students who are already struggling. It risks creating environments where bullying, discrimination, and hatred thrive, because if educators are not empowered to respect students' identities, neither will their peers. It opens the door for harm, and it sends the message that who we are doesn't matter—that our identities are not worthy of respect.

This bill is not just about names and pronouns—it's about erasing identities and denying students the dignity and respect they deserve. It's about silencing voices and creating environments where some students are treated as less than others. We should not be going

backward in time; we should be advancing toward a future where every student, regardless of their gender identity, feels valued and accepted.

I urge you to reconsider this harmful piece of legislation. Every student deserves to be called by their gender-affirming name and pronouns. We owe it to them, as educators, legislators, and human beings, to create a world where our children can feel safe, seen, and loved for who they truly are.

Once again, I thank you all for hearing my story and thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote no of the passage of SB 76. Thank you.

**Opponent Testimony of SB76
For the Senate Education Committee
February 10th, 2025
Vinn Brockway
Student of Kansas Public Schools**

As a Kansas citizen I'm going to tell you why I think this bill should not be passed... First, I think that Section 1, subsection B goes against all the natural beliefs of a human. It states, "No employee of a school district or postsecondary educational institution, regardless of such employee's official duties, shall address a minor or student without a (1) Pronoun or title that is inconsistent with the biological sex of such minor or student unless the employee has the written permission of such minor's or student's parent." This is like telling someone that their beliefs are not valid and that they can't be who they want to be. I think that if the government can't respect the wishes of the people then maybe they should rethink their strategy. For example, if a student was to tell the teacher that they wanted to be called by a different name and pronouns other than their birth given name and pronouns and the teacher can't because of a law, that would be the same as telling the world that people can't be who they want to be. It's telling us as citizens that our beliefs aren't going to be validated. It's telling us that we are not able to be who we chose to be. With that being said, if this bill is passed it will hurt the pride of many Americans, adults and students alike. It is saying that we as the American people can't express ourselves the way that we want to as individuals.

As a non-binary student, who uses a different name and pronouns than what I was assigned at birth, I have struggled with fitting in and discovering who I am as a person. However, once I began using my own chosen name and pronouns of they/them, I finally felt more comfortable in my everyday life. All of my teachers call me by my chosen name, most of the students call me by it as well. After four years of struggling with finding myself, I found a group of teachers and students that all respect my preferred name and pronouns. I also know many other students who use a different name or pronouns in the school setting. It is the one thing they finally feel comfortable with. So, if this bill gets passed it won't be hurting just me, it will be hurting many others who use different names and pronouns.

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony in opposition of Senate Bill 76 on behalf of Students of Kansas Public Schools.

Opposition Testimony for SB 76

For the Senate Education Committee

February 10th, 2025

Audrey Brooker

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony to SB 76. I live in Roeland Park, Kansas. I care deeply about the dignity, respect, and safety of kids, teens, and adults in Kansas. SB 76 is part of a shameful, ongoing attack on ALL Americans. If we have to look to legislators to determine our freedom of identify and expression, we continue down the long and dangerous decent into fascism. Your mask is off and we see you. We will not stand for this. Trans people and gender fluid people have always existed and will always exist. This bill does not change anything about society, norms, or nature. It is a blatant attack on the physical, emotional, and psychological wellbeing of Kansas youth. Supporting LGBTQIA youth is suicide prevention. SB 76 is also an attack on teachers, school staff, and parents who are just trying to educate youth in a safe, supportive, and dignified environment. Your constituents beg you to mind your own business about our bodies and our freedom of expression. Consult medical and mental health professionals when drawing your conclusions about childhood development and psychological wellbeing. If you want to protect Kansas youth and school staff, we implore you to start with what is actually harming kids - gun violence – by supporting gun violence prevention policies that have been proven to effectively reduce violence in our communities.

Opposition Testimony for SB 76 For the Senate Education Committee

February 10, 2025

Wren Browne

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee:

SB76 is needlessly cruel, and attacks trans children for no reason. The impact that this will have on every child and all of their teachers is profound: it creates a class of citizen and inherently upholds inequality in the classroom. You are forcing every child to adhere to your inane belief that using a name other than the one on their birth certificate is going to harm anyone. I have been around trans individuals my entire life and never have I ever been harmed, harassed, or made uncomfortable by using their chosen name and pronouns, as opposed to those assigned at birth. SB76 is nothing but fearmongering and execution of a power trip. This bill will never impact your life in any way other than giving you smug satisfaction that you have crushed a child's spirit, their joy, their exploration of who they are and who they can be.

Every child has their phases – as early as their “Terrible Twos,” we understand that children have no choice but to trial-and-error their way through life. They must learn to speak, to walk, to share, to play. This becomes more complicated as they get older and there are more social expectations and necessities that they must learn and conquer, and through it all they will go through phases of liking and disliking shows, books, games, characters, friends, colors, and more. Personally, when I was five, I made everyone call me Sleeping Beauty. Literally, I would not respond to my preschool teachers unless I heard “Sleeping Beauty.” That certainly isn't and wasn't the name on my birth certificate, but you know who cared? No one. Because it was fine. At my second job as a teenager, I wrote a different name on my nametag every day because I thought it was funny. I used traditionally female names, traditionally male names, and names in between. In my fairly conservative hometown, not a single person cared if the name of their shawarma server matched the server's appearance.

Having phases is normal and healthy and lets children discover what makes them happy. By pushing SB76, their phases might not be allowed to run their course, or perhaps they will never experiment with their names or genders in public. But they will enter a phase of deep shame that they will ever outgrow. They will know that their legislators do not respect them or the many people in their community. They will feel outcast, alone, frightened, and it will be the fault of a former middle school teacher. Renee, after interacting with vulnerable students for so many years, wouldn't you rather reach out and support these children, rather than to embarrass and exile them? You have the platform to be a beacon of hope for the future, and instead you use your platform to perversely cry “free speech” so you can hate more vocally.

I hope your children and grandchildren, for their own safety and wellbeing, are not LGBTQ+, so they ever have to feel so isolated by you. I hope, also, that they never have a sense of wonder or curiosity, so you cannot make them feel small and unworthy. I hope that you can find comfort in the fact that your joy comes at the expense of children's futures.



Testimony in Opposition to Bill SB 76 -

Requiring employees of school districts and postsecondary educational institutions to use the name and pronouns consistent with a student's biological sex and birth certificate

Senate Education Committee

February 10, 2025

Laurel Burchfield

Advocacy Director, Mainstream

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony for Senate Bill 76 on behalf of Mainstream.

Mainstream OPPOSES SB76.

Mainstream was founded over 30 years ago by faith leaders who warned about the intrusion of narrow, extremist religious views into our government and public institutions. In the following decades, Mainstream members have fought to protect our religious freedoms and maintain strong church-state separation because Kansans value their freedom to live as they see fit without the overreach of government or religion into their personal lives.

In SB76 we see the national agenda to define gender and control transgender bodies based on a narrow biblical perspective. And Mainstream staff use the words "narrow" and "extremist" intentionally when we speak of these efforts to deny transgender Kansans their rights because many people of faith embrace transgender individuals and their families as a tenant of their faith. As visible in the opposition testimony on SB63 this year – the bill that has already passed the legislature and would ban gender affirming care in Kansas, including the use of chosen pronouns – there are a lot of Kansans who believe it is our duty and honor to love and support our transgender youth.

SB76 is an insult to our transgender youth and their loved ones. But this legislature has already made clear that the rights, safety, and happiness of transgender youth is not their priority. It's also a slap in the face to all Kansans who believe in trans rights, who support the youth in their classrooms and in their lives, who affirm the unique and beautiful identities of all of our children, and who believe that their faith calls on them to love their neighbor.

Mainstream opposes SB76 because we view this bill as a prioritization of the religious beliefs of the few over the professional and ethical obligations of our teachers and school staff to care for all Kansas students. In 2024, over 100 Kansas educators signed on to a letter opposing a version of the gender affirming care ban, saying "Laws that restrict the free speech of our educators in acknowledging social transitioning...denies transgender youth the support they desperately need and mandates the rejection of their identities and sense of self. We must recognize the role of our teachers in shaping students' lives....Educators have a moral obligation to make our schools and

educational spaces as safe as we can, which includes the emotional and mental well-being of all our students. [These] laws require us to act against the wishes of the student and their parents, and hinder our ability to create a safe and welcoming classroom for all students.”

SB76 frames the use of chosen names and pronouns as a free speech battle and a matter of “academic freedom as it communicates a message on a matter of public concern and shapes classroom discussion and debate.” That matter of public concern is the very existence of transgender Kansans in public spaces like schools. Just like in other attacks against transgender youth, the majority of this legislature has decided that they, not our trained professional academic staff and faculty, have the exclusive right to decide how transgender Kansans get to live in our state. And that message that they are now burdening our teachers to carry, is that trans students don’t have rights in Kansas. Mainstream argues that instead of protecting free speech, SB76 is actually a violation of free speech for the tens of thousands of teachers, faculty, and administrative and support staff in our schools and post-secondary institutions.

Transgender Kansans and their loved ones have testified about the real harm, sometimes life-threatening, that comes from denying youth access to gender affirming care, including the use of chosen pronouns and names. The majority of this legislative body has already chosen to ignore them once this year by sending to the governor the gender affirming care ban, SB63. The bill before you today in SB76 does nothing more than acknowledge – without the cover of “protecting” youth from surgical and medical interventions – that this legislature is intending to erase transgender identity in Kansas.

Mainstream urges you to reject SB76.

Susan Burchill
sburchill57@gmail.com
private citizen
2/13/2025

opponent

Thank you Chairman Erickson and members of the Committee for allowing me to share my thoughts on SB76. My name is Susan Burchill and I am a voter in Wichita 67208. I am writing to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

Punishing educators for showing respect to students by calling them by their chosen name violates the free speech of educators and the rights of students. I spent 42 years as a teacher in Kansas public schools. Since early in my career, I have been intentional about finding out a student's preferred name and using it as a way to show them respect and dignity.

As a young teacher, I had a student ask to be called Brian instead of his given name, Richard. I agreed to call him Brian and saw a look of gratitude in his eyes. There were some staff members who refused saying, "Richard is on his birth certificate so that is what I will call him." Every time he was called Richard, I could see him flinch. One day he came back from PE in tears. The PE teacher had called him Richard and when he, once again, asked to be called Brian, she loudly proclaimed, "Your name is RICHARD! Everyone needs to call you by your REAL name!" As so, the taunts and bullying began. Eventually, Brian told me why being called by his chosen name was so important to him. He was named after his father--the man who was in prison for sexually abusing his own son and namesake. Every time he was called by that name was "like another knife in my heart."

From that day on, I have called students by the name they prefer whether it be Jimmy instead of James, by their middle name or a nickname, or Marlo instead of Marc. Brian was not transgender, but the emotional harm is the same for any child who is not being respected. Every human is better able to think and learn when they feel seen, valued, and respected. Using a preferred name is one of the ways that educators can let student know that they are in an emotionally safe classroom where the most learning can take place. Students who are disrespected often shut down and learning stops.

Politicians need to stop interfering with educators and allow them to do their difficult job in the way they know to be most beneficial to their students.

I thank you for letting me share my story and thoughts. I encourage you all to vote NO on SB76.

Cat Butler
sodiumcat.e@gmail.com
Private citizen
2/7/2025

Opponent

Chairman Erickson and members of the committee, thank you for giving me time to express my thoughts on SB 76 today. My name is Cat Butler and I'm a voter in Sedgwick County. I'm writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on SB 76

This is a warping of trans' students first amendment rights, and its insidious that it is targeting kids of all things. Leave the kids and teachers alone. Inserting our state into the right wing culture war will ultimately harm our ability to teach our kids.

Once again, I thank you for hearing my story and thoughts on this bill and I encourage you all to vote no on the passage of SB 76. Thank you.

Opponent Testimony of Senate Bill 76
For the Senate Education Committee
February 10th, 2025
Sarah Byarlay
Educator, USD 305, Salina, KS

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide proponent testimony in opposition of Senate Bill 76 on behalf of Public School Educators in Kansas.

I am firmly in opposition of this proposed bill for a multitude of reasons. First, in all my years of teaching within Kansas Public Schools, I have never once seen a single bit of harm come to *anyone* simply because of a change of name or pronouns. The concept of Social Transitioning as a detriment to students or educational foundations in any way is absurd and preposterous. Perhaps a better understanding of my background can help shed some light on why I feel so strongly about opposing this unconstitutional piece of legislation.

I am a 36-year-old, white, middle class, Christian, female, heterosexual, married, U.S. Military veteran. I served this country for 14 years in both the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Air Force. During that time, I was deployed to Helmand Province, Afghanistan for 11 months. Upon my return from my overseas deployment, I chose to finally begin living out my lifelong dream of becoming a teacher. I enrolled at Kansas State University - Salina, right down the street from my house. For the next few years, I focused on assisting other veterans in their transition from military life to the life of a civilian college student. I founded the Student Veterans' Association at KSU Salina, and set about caring for others like me. What I began to realize was that there was a huge gap in the way that we as American and Kansas citizens care for others when they truly need it, and even ask for it.

I understand that in all of my positionalities, I have privilege. I had the ability to use my influences and privileges to open resourceful doors for those who have needed them. What should have happened, though, was that when those veterans, my peers, reached out and asked the State of Kansas for help, they should have been given everything they needed to feel seen, respected, validated, and protected. They weren't.

What I haven't mentioned is that many of these U.S. Veteran's about whom I am speaking were also members of the LGBTQ+ community. Does that negate their service to our state and our country? Absolutely not. Does that make them less than you? No. Does that mean that they should be forced into uncomfortable situations where they feel targeted and terrified for being their true, individual selves? Again, absolutely not. They were pushed to the side and forgotten--and out of sight, out of mind problem that seemingly needed to be ignored according to those who were elected to represent and defend their right to individuality.

For the 4th time in so many years, I was contacted just yesterday, Thursday, February 6th, that one of those same members committed suicide. His funeral is Saturday, February 8th. He leaves behind a young family.

What is this world coming to where the one thing that could possibly save an educator's or a student's life--simply validating them, protecting them, and helping them feel seen--is referred to as "harmful?" I now have the ultimate privilege of using my status as a public school educator, veteran, and human rights advocate, to say that you are the harmful ones if you choose to pass this bill.

My students feel seen. They feel heard. No one bats an eye at different names or pronouns in my classroom, or anywhere in my district. We respect and care for one another because we are all humans and we all equally deserve to be seen, heard, and valued. My students will continue to look forward to coming to my classroom as it may be one of the only places in their lives that they feel safe, protected, valued, and loved. It will always be that way--no matter what.

Thank you.