

Opponent Testimony of SB 76
For the Senate Education Committee
Written February 7, 2025
February 10, 2025
Tashina Rose Hafen
Private Citizen

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony against Senate Bill 76 on behalf of myself, Tashina Rose (they/them, she/her).

I am a two-spirit individual, Nádleehi the term is in Diné (Navajo). Growing up, I was forced into a very feminine box, a box that was— as I grew older, one I couldn't fit in.

I was able to learn how to be myself in school. By using preferred names and pronouns, I was able to flourish in school. From middle school to high school my mental health was at its worst. I wasn't able to be myself at home, or in my conservative community. I nearly left this plane of existence multiple times due to the fact that I was not able to freely express myself in my primary learning environment.

Now I'm a sophomore in college with a 4.0 GPA, and over 1,000 days clean from hurting myself like I did in grade school. I'm able to freely express myself with my preferred name and pronouns.

And I can testify that no one has an issue with that in my

school.

This bill is harmful to many minors in schools, they may have thoughts as I did in school— where it wasn't a safe place to be. This bill is also harmful to adult students in colleges and universities, and respectfully has no place in the educational legislation of Kansas.

I oppose this bill, and urge you all to vote no. This bill will not protect kids, it will hurt many more than you think it will protect.

Thank you for you time,
Tashina Rose
(they/them, she/her)

Testimony of Anna Hales

7818 Allman Rd, Lenexa KS

Regarding SB 76

02/07/2025

Dear Chairperson,

My name is Anna Hales. I am a long time resident of Johnson County, Kansas, and have family members in the LGBTQ+ community. I have seen their genuine hurt and suffering through both their individual journeys and the journey our country has been in over the past years. I beg you to have empathy and understanding through this ruling.

While you or I may not ever understand the struggle of their communities, I know that what I have seen my loved ones go through proves no one would willingly choose to be transgender and face these difficulties. At the end of the day, the simplicity of using pronouns to make people content and make the world a better place is not a big enough deal for my tax dollars to be paying for you to debate this issue. They are just words, and they have no affect on cis-gendered people, but mean everything to the trans community. I would beg the representatives of my beloved state to have empathy in their heart and be willing to do the small, selfless act of being willing to use one simple word "they/them, he/him" etc. instead of another one. I am hurt and upset that I am paying money for our representatives to refuse to do the bare minimum to make more peace in the world.

I hope you take my words in serious consideration.

Anna Hales

Testimony of Henry Hales

Regarding **SB 76**

02/07/2025

Salutations, Chairperson.

My name is Henry Hales, I'm a local librarian in the Johnson County Library System. I work in the childrens and teens department. I am writing today to express an emphatic disaproval of the existence of proposed bill SB 76, which would directly impact the lives of the children and teens I work with every day.

This bill seeks to ban the use of chosen names and pronouns for trans students without parental permission. To be frank: this bill is inane, nothing more than a declaration of vitriolic hatred, and it is going to contribute to massively increasing rates of suicide in students. Suicide is the third leading cause of death among high school students in the US. More often than not it is an extreme action that is chosen as a direct result of bullying. This bill would protect anyone (adult staff or student peers) seeking to deliberately target and harass trans students via deadnaming, misgendering, etc. That is incredibly demoralizing in a way that no one deserves. I do not care what your position is on the existence of trans individuals. Banning "pronouns" in any setting will not remove the existence of trans people within that space. But you know what it will do? It will push students to take their own lives when they are bullied day in day out at school and their teachers--the adults in their lives who are supposed to look out for them, help educate them, and keep them safe--are unable to do those things for fear of being sued and fired. If this bill becomes law you will watch schools across the state hemorrhage with staffing issues. Schools will lose their most supporting teachers. More than that: if you introduce this bill as law you will be putting the lives of children across the state in jeopardy. You *will* watch suicide rates of literal CHILDREN increase exponentially. Can you live with that?

I urge you to take this bill for what it really is: nothing more than pure, senseless hatred towards a minority group, a targeted attack at children who are already struggling across the state. The status quo harms no one. This bill would introduce intentional aggression, disharmony, and pain.

Thank you for your time today, and thank you for hearing my concenrs.

No not pass bill SB 76 into law.

7 February 2025

RE: SB 76

Dear Senators,

Why are you wasting time arguing about pronouns? Your definition or our world's definition of someone's personal self-held identity is not going to be changed by something that is legislated. It's damaging and leads to physical harm of queer/trans people being bullied, harassed. Suicide rates are already high. **WHY ARE YOU WASTING TIME ON THIS!**

This is not why we elected you. Nothing the legislator can do is going to change this aspect of our world, and I don't see why we are even talking about "pronouns" or the fact that someone is offended because someone else identifies gender differently. Soo many bigger fish to fry. Our President has completely thrown out the Constitution of the United States and gone rogue, and you are arguing pronouns. Stop wasting time on this.

Grow a backbone and stand up for the people who elected you which include they/them, he/him and she/her, and myself, a white heterosexual male.

Kimball Hales

Lenexa, KS

Testimony of Laura Hales

Regarding SB76

02/07/2025

My name is Laura Hales. I live in Lenexa, Kansas and I am writing today to express my concern with proposed bill SB76.

I am an economist and I study vulnerable populations for a living. The trans population has some unique struggles and outcomes later in life can be poor for them. Trans children have high suicide rates as well. This bill would protect anyone seeking to deliberately bully or make their lives more difficult. School is hard enough as it is so let's not make it more so for vulnerable populations.

Laura Hales

Lenexa, KS

Legislative Testimony

In Opposition to SB76
Senate Committee on Education
February 10th, 2025

Written Only

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee,

My name is Rashane Hamby, and I serve as the Director of Policy and Research at the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Kansas. The ACLU of Kansas is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization with more than 35,000 supporters statewide, dedicated to protecting and advancing the civil rights and liberties of all Kansans. I am writing to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 76 (SB 76), a bill that imposes unnecessary and harmful restrictions on educators and students regarding names and pronouns. This legislation places undue burdens on teachers while endangering the well-being of students—particularly transgender and gender-diverse youth. Every Kansas student has the right to be addressed by their gender-affirming name and pronouns. Schools have a legal and ethical obligation to respect students' gender identities, regardless of whether they have been able to legally update their names or gender markers. SB 76 is not only an overreach but also a direct threat to the dignity and safety of students across Kansas.

Every Kansas Student Has the Right to Be Called by Their Gender-Affirming Name and Pronouns

Under Kansas law, when a child enrolls in a school for the first time, schools must require “proof of identity” (Kansas Statutes Annotated, § 72-9934, 2023). This proof may include a certified copy of the child’s birth certificate, a certified transcript or similar student records for children in grades 2 through 12, or any other documentary evidence deemed satisfactory by the school board (Kansas Statutes Annotated, § 72-9934, 2023). Although documentary proof of identity is required upon enrollment, no Kansas or federal law mandates that a school—whether its board, administrators, teachers, or employees—refer to a student by the name listed on these documents. Likewise, no law requires schools to use pronouns that align with a student’s gender assigned at birth or the original gender marker on their birth certificate or other identity records.

It is therefore legally permissible for schools, including administrators, teachers, and staff, to use a student’s gender-affirming name and pronouns in daily interactions—even if those names or pronouns are not reflected in official records. In fact, denying students this right may violate Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. § 1681) and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Courts across the country have ruled that refusing to use a person’s gender-affirming name and pronouns can constitute gender-

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based harassment in violation of the Equal Protection Clause (*Grimm v. Gloucester County School Board*, 2020; *Bostock v. Clayton County*, 2020). Furthermore, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights and the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division have stated that failure to use a student's gender-affirming name and pronouns may be investigated as gender-based harassment under Title IX (U.S. Department of Education, 2021). Schools have a legal and ethical obligation to respect every student's gender identity, regardless of whether they have legally updated their name or gender marker.

This Law Would Be a Violation of Students' Privacy and Put Their Safety at Risk

Students' interests in privacy and safety are directly linked to their right to be addressed by names and pronouns that reflect their gender identity. Respecting students' gender-affirming names and pronouns is essential to protecting transgender and gender-diverse students from bullying and discrimination in school. When teachers or staff misgender or deadname a student, it not only violates the student's dignity but also signals to peers that such behavior is acceptable—thereby increasing the likelihood of bullying and harassment. Research has shown that affirming a transgender student's name and pronouns significantly improves mental health and overall well-being. According to a study published in the *Journal of Adolescent Health*, transgender youth who have their names and pronouns respected report 71% fewer symptoms of severe depression, a 34% decrease in suicidal ideation, and a 65% reduction in suicide attempts (Russell, Pollitt, Li, & Grossman, 2018). Ensuring that schools respect students' gender identities is not only best practice; it is also a crucial step in creating a safe and supportive learning environment for all.

The Harmful Impact on Educators and the Education System

The damages section of SB 76 is overly broad and creates significant potential for litigation based on overheard conversations. The bill does not require that the person suing for damages have been directly involved in the conversation; anyone who merely overhears a discussion could bring a lawsuit. Moreover, the bill states that a person may sue if they are "harmed" by a violation—an undefined term that could result in litigation over a simple misunderstanding.

This bill prohibits the use of any nicknames deemed "derivative" of a student's legal name, regardless of gender, even though the term "derivative" is never defined—and many new names chosen by transgender students after transitioning are, in fact, derivative of their birth names. Enforcing this vague provision would likely lead to the unwarranted disciplining of students—especially transgender and gender-diverse individuals—who choose nicknames that are

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derivative of their legal names regardless of gender, ultimately undermining their ability to express their authentic identities and exacerbating their marginalization.

The unenforceability of the bill would place excessive administrative burdens on local schools and institutions of higher education. Schools would be forced to develop enforcement systems without clear guidance, increasing both costs and liability risks. Additionally, there is no feasible way to ensure that every school employee and student is aware of every other student's name and sex as listed on their birth certificate—and such a system should not be required. Under Kansas law, when a child enrolls in a school for the first time, schools must require “proof of identity” (Kansas Statutes Annotated, § 72-9934, 2023), yet this proof does not necessarily have to be a birth certificate. Furthermore, out-of-state birth certificates may be amended to reflect a transgender student's name and gender marker, making consistent enforcement impossible. Some Kansas birth certificates were amended prior to the 2023 policy change by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, and Kansas law still permits name changes on birth certificates. These factors render uniform enforcement impractical and inequitable.

The bill also provides that “a person who is harmed by a violation” may seek injunctive relief, monetary damages, reasonable attorney fees, and any other appropriate relief. This language effectively deputizes students, teachers, and other school personnel to act as enforcers of the law, fostering a “Big Brother” or secret-police environment in schools. Such an environment would erode trust between students, teachers, and administrators, ultimately harming the broader community. Additionally, this provision would place an immense burden on Kansas's judicial system. To establish standing in Kansas courts, a plaintiff must demonstrate a cognizable injury and a direct causal connection between that injury and the challenged conduct (*Gannon v. State*, 2014). By inviting individuals without legitimate standing to file lawsuits, the bill would likely flood the courts with frivolous cases, wasting judicial resources and diverting attention from genuine educational concerns.

Conclusion

In conclusion, SB 76 is a misguided and harmful piece of legislation that will have serious negative consequences for students, educators, and school communities across Kansas. It prioritizes political ideology over the well-being of children and the authority of local school districts. I strongly urge you to vote against this bill and instead focus on policies that support all students in their educational journey.

Sincerely,
Rashane Hamby

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Legislative Testimony

In **Opposition** to SB76
Senate Committee on Education
February 10th, 2025

Director of Policy and Research
ACLU of Kansas

References

Bostock v. Clayton County, 140 S. Ct. 1731 (2020).

Gannon v. State, 298 Kan. 1107, 319 P.3d 1196 (2014).

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Russell, S. T., Pollitt, A. M., Li, G., & Grossman, A. H. (2018). Chosen name use is linked to reduced depressive symptoms, suicidal ideation, and suicidal behavior among transgender youth. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 63(4), 503–505.

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Clara Hampton
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PRIVATE CITIZEN
2/10/2025

OPPONENT

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 Clara and I am a voter in Prairie Village. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on SB 76.

I am a trans social work student working within a school system: often with queer youth. I can understand how one would want to protect vulnerable children, as discussed in this bill. However, SB 76 does the exact opposite and instead harms them. I am certain you have already heard the argument and seen the data about how social supports and gender affirming care save the lives of trans kids. You have heard pleas of mothers of dead trans children urge you not to pass transphobic bills. You understand our argument. I offer another perspective: making these laws makes it harder for school employees and especially school social workers to do their jobs. Teachers, educators, and school social workers will have to give up their freedom of speech in their work environments and go against their personal morals with this bill. This is something that both political parties hate to do, as it is unfair to ask someone to give up their right to speech and morals for values that the state is enforcing on them. We cannot keep restricting the rights of professionals to do their jobs, follow their morals, or do something as simple as saying a name. With this law a teacher could be sued for calling a kid Bill instead of Billy even if the student isn't trans. Nonetheless, working in the school under social work, I would be required to break my code of ethics for following this bill, leaving me with two bad options: possibly losing my license for breaking my ethics or possibly losing my license for naming a child the way they want to be named. This makes life harder for every single school staff member. It is bills like these that make me want to leave our wonderful state after living here for over a decade. I urge you to please take the time to read the testimonies of Kansas teachers and school staff who disagree, and remember Kansas is our state not your state.

Once again, thank you for listening to a Kansas voter involved in this matter, and I encourage you to vote NO to the passage of SB 76. Thank you.

Opponent Testimony of SB 76
For the Senate Education Committee
February 10, 2025
Zoe Hanquier
Private Citizen

I would like to oppose SB 76. Gender identity, pronouns, and a chosen name are individual rights. This is an expression of self, of speech that should not be dependent on parental permission. Further, we should protect individuals who use a chosen name and pronouns different from those they were born with by ensuring their identity is respected by their community. In school, the focus should be education. It is hard to focus on learning if your very existence is not acknowledged or accepted. Please look in your hearts to protect our vulnerable transgender communities.

Opposition Testimony for SB 76
For the Senate Education Committee
February 10, 2025
Rhonna Hargett, Manhattan, KS

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on SB 76. I am writing to you as a mother whose oldest child will be directly harmed through the passing of this bill.

My daughter was born and raised in Kansas. She is now a thriving student and student worker at K-State. She inherited her seamstress great grandmother's talent for sewing, which has enabled her to make her own clothes and to help our church's quilting group make blankets for the homeless in our community and many others around the world. She regularly helps her grandparents with technology and house cleaning. She is a dedicated baker and loves making cinnamon rolls, pizza and other delicious items for our family, friends, and church events. I tell you these things to make sure that you are aware of her humanity. She isn't just a transgender person, she is a beloved daughter, a native Kansan and a child of God.

She was not influenced by her family or by any teachers to "decide" that she was transgender. This is the way she was born. The only decision she made was to be herself. We do not know what "made" her transgender, but we know that she has not experienced any pressure to use any particular pronoun or name, undergo any medical procedures, or anything like that. This is something that she came to understand on her own, and our belief that she was made in the image of God has led us to be supportive of her.

Statistics show that 30-40% of transgender teens attempt suicide, but that percentage drops drastically when they have a supportive family and community. Both the American Medical Association and the American Psychological Association have made statements that using chosen pronouns and names is best practice for the health and well-being of transgender individuals.

When you promote bills like SB 76, you are demonstrating a disregard for the well-being of my child. You are willing to expose her to serious harm, even though she is kind and caring and makes positive contributions to our state.

Besides the philosophical issues, there are practical issues that you should consider. There are several states that we will not visit because of how they treat transgender people. Passing bills like this will reduce Kansas travel from not just those who have a transgender person in their family, but also those who don't want to spend their money in a state that bullies some of its most vulnerable children. By passing this bill it makes our home state look like a backwater. Our universities are already shrinking, if this bill passes that shrinkage will only increase as both Kansans and the many out-of-state students will go elsewhere. It will make it more difficult for our universities and businesses to recruit workers to come to Kansas because they won't want to put their children in harmful learning environments.

This bill will subject transgender kids and college students to bullying and harm their mental and physical health. I ask you to vote this bill down and allow transgender kids to live their lives and become valuable contributors to our great state.

SB 76 Opposition Testimony (written only)

For the Senate Education Committee

Hearing Date: 2/10/2025

Marcel Harmon, marcelharmon@gmail.com

Private Citizen and former School Board Member / President (USD 497)

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for this opportunity to share my opponent testimony. My opposition stems from my previous experience as a school board member and as the parent of a transgender young adult who attended public schools in Lawrence, KS. Banning school and post-secondary employees from using a minor student's preferred pronouns/name and including an extremely broad damages clause in the bill are direct attacks on a) public schools and higher education institutions and their employees and b) transgender youth by stripping away their rights to privacy, safety, self-determination, and free speech.

As a former school board member (who heard directly from teachers and staff, administrators, transgender students and their families, as well as various community groups and individuals on such issues), I know that such a bill will result in varying forms of the following across the state.

- The a) reckless, overly broad damages section, allowing litigation from those who only overheard a conversation, combined with b) the near impossible task of ensuring every district employee and student has the knowledge of every student's name and sex listed on their birth certificate, will increase the risk of school districts and their employees having to deal with frankly ridiculous lawsuits. This uses critical and limited district resources, financial and otherwise, taking away from school districts' mission of equitably providing high quality education to all of their community's students. *It will be a waste of taxpayer dollars.*
- The threat of lawsuits will also be increased by NOT using a student's preferred pronouns or name. Schools have a legal obligation to respect student gender identity, even if names or markers haven't been legally changed. Ignoring that could be seen as a violation of Title IX and the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution (which U.S. courts have ruled in the past).

- This bill will further add to the cost of district operations, as administration will have to develop, install, and maintain systems of monitoring and enforcement (of a legislated policy that is frankly cruel and *wasteful of district resources, and therefore taxpayer dollars*). School board meetings themselves will no doubt have increased time (not insubstantial) devoted to discussing logistics, individual cases, hearing from the public, etc., as a result of the bill.
- It removes the authority of local school board members, who have been duly elected by their local communities, to make such decisions for their own community. It *takes away the local control* that so many legislators claim to champion.
- The increased stress and financial threat that this will add to school district teachers and staff will increase the rate of those leaving their respective professions within the public school system, as well as act as a deterrent for those choosing to enter the profession and/or working for public schools. Kansas public schools already struggle to keep them adequately staffed, especially many of our rural districts. This will just add to the problem.
- Schools are trying to create physical and social environments that are conducive to learning for all of their students (and conducive to teaching and providing support for all of the adult employees). Increasing the risk of bullying and harassment by a) outing or drawing attention to students who don't wish it and b) essentially giving permission to other students to deadname and/or misgender students reduces the quality of the teaching / learning environment (for the offenders as well as the targets).
- The quality of the teaching / learning environment will be further reduced by the disruptions to relationships and operations that will inevitably happen as a result of everyone worrying about being reported and listened to (spied on). Trust, which is critical in a school environment, will be negatively impacted.
- The exploitation of free speech to justify this bill is particularly egregious. An educator can easily lead and respectfully "shape classroom discussions and debates" of gender related issues that are "a matter of public concern" without violating students' rights in the process.

I have previously shared in detail through past emails and articles the impacts that bills like this, and the rhetoric surrounding them, have on my family. Here are some examples.

- Our youngest is transgender and he graduated from Lawrence Free State High in 2023. He was fortunate that teachers and staff accepted his gender identity and used his preferred pronouns and name. It contributed significantly to his mental health and success in school. And it meant a lot to his mother and I. Given all that, he would still find himself in school situations that were uncomfortable and even a little scary to him – some of the worst were making use of restrooms and locker rooms. He would tend to hold it most of the day as opposed to using a restroom, which negatively impacted his health and learning. And that occurred despite the high school being a mostly supportive environment (likely contributed to by the amount of anti-transgender sentiment in society currently, including the Kansas legislature). I really worry about other transgender students and their families who would have to experience school under such a bill.
- And our son hates knowing that legislators craft legislation impacting LGBTQ individuals and vote on it without knowing what it's like to be LGBTQ, without ever having meaningful conversations with someone who's LGBTQ, or conversations with the teachers, counselors, etc., who provide support for all students, including transgender students, in school. He hates hearing about other trans and LGBTQ youth and people who've been harassed and attacked, or worse.
- He hates having that nagging fear about his safety in the back of his head when he's in public, just taking the bus, at a pride parade, etc. He hates being misgendered at work or elsewhere in public and having to weigh whether or not it's worth pointing out relative to the potential reaction that might occur. He hates having to weigh the pros and cons, that vary by location, every time he needs to decide which restroom to use when he's in public.
- The stress that parents and other family members of transgender individuals feel also takes a toll. Reference the Scientific American article linked to in this piece: [Families Find Ways to Protect Their LGBTQ Kids](https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/families-find-ways-to-protect-their-lgbtq-kids-from-serious-harm-physical/) - <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/families-find-ways-to-protect-their-lgbtq-kids-from-serious-harm-physical/>. “Diamond, the University of Utah psychologist, says this hypervigilant state can be devastating to parents. She has studied minority stress in members of the LGBTQ community and in their caregivers, and she believes the absence of safety erodes their mental health. The same response designed to protect humans from the proverbial saber-toothed tiger is now perpetually activated by headlines signaling that LGBTQ kids are threatened.” For us, it’s a stress that’s

always there. Fortunately for us, we have the resources and insurance available to take advantage of mental healthcare. But not every Kansan does.

I would encourage you to have some heartfelt discussions with constituents who are teachers, faculty, administrators, etc., as well as those who are transgender, their families, and/or who are allies. Read up on this. Delve through the information provided by the likely large number of opponents of this bill. And for those who are curious, below is some information on gender and sex from various scientific perspectives. This bill really is an attack on public schools, higher education institutions, and transgender students and their families.

Once again, I thank you all for reviewing my thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to do what's best for Kansas and vote no on the passage of SB 76 out of committee.

SCIENCE, the natural, medical, and social sciences, they **ALL** tell us that biological sex and gender are not the same thing, and that neither are binary (a few references are below). And because of that, the physical and social environments we provide our young people need to reflect this reality. Please step back and look at this with some curiosity – expand what you think you know about biological sex and gender.

- Biological sex is chemically and genetically more complex than XX and XY – it isn't actually binary (and this applies to other species as well). From some of the sources out there, those born with atypical genitalia (other terms used include intersex and ambiguous genitalia) range from 0.1% to 2%. With 8.2 billion people currently on the planet, then anywhere from 8.2 million to 164 million people currently alive today may have been born with some type of atypical genitalia. Biology, genetics, medicine, etc. do not support the statement that biological sex is binary. Here are some sources if you're interested.
 - Atypical Genitalia (Formerly Known as Ambiguous Genitalia):
<https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/22470-atypical-genitalia-formerly-known-as-ambiguous-genitalia>.
 - What's intersex? <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/learn/gender-identity/sex-gender-identity/whats-intersex>.

- Sex Redefined: The Idea of 2 Sexes Is Overly Simplistic:
<https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/sex-redefined-the-idea-of-2-sexes-is-overly-simplistic1>.
 - Brain Sex Differences Related to Gender Identity Development: Genes or Hormones? -
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7139786/>.
- While some of the literature will label these occurrences as disorders, it's important to recognize that such a label, outside of the medical context (which admittedly can impact one's health depending on the specific condition), has large cultural implications – it's a value judgement. Decisions made by parents (and adults later in life) relative to courses taken are heavily influenced by pressure to "fit" within a society that doesn't understand or even accept the reality of their conditions. But they were born that way.
- Gender, while influenced by biological sex, is heavily determined by cultural factors and societal norms. It is the inner sense of self as female, male, fluid, or some other alternative gender (though the specific details of how this manifests individually and collectively is still a subject of debate among experts and varies somewhat by discipline). But the social sciences overall do not support the idea that gender and biological sex are the same thing or that gender is binary. Here are some sources if you're interested.
 - Gender is conceptualized in different ways across cultures:
<https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/language-and-cognition/article/gender-is-conceptualized-in-different-ways-across-cultures/88A19740AE09E6299B9836158053B57F>.
 - Sociology of Gender: <https://othersociologist.com/sociology-of-gender/>.
 - Brain Sex Differences Related to Gender Identity Development: Genes or Hormones?
<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC7139786/>.
 - Adding Some Curiosity to Common Sense:
<https://marcelharmon67.substack.com/p/adding-some-curiosity-to-common-sense>.

Hello,

I am submitting testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 76.

I am a mathematics teacher at Lawrence High School, with eleven years of experience. One of the most evident truths for a teacher is that student success, both inside and outside the classroom, hinges on mutual respect with teachers.

As a teacher, I am committed to earning the trust and respect of my students so that I can effectively help them shape a successful future. This mutual respect is built upon the social contract between teachers and students, where politeness and respect for each other's wishes form the foundation of understanding. Each student-teacher relationship is unique, and the decisions regarding naming and pronoun use should be left to each individual relationship.

This legislation blatantly undermines the ability of teachers to build this respect with their students. It comes at a critical time when education is already in a precarious state, and prohibiting teachers' speech is not the appropriate focus. This legislation demonstrates a profound lack of concern for students and a blatant disregard for their opinions.

The timing of this legislation is also highly suspicious. I discovered this legislation just 24 hours before the testimony was due. This lack of interest in the opinions of the individuals it would affect is a damning indictment of the individuals who put this bill together. I strongly urge you to oppose SB76.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Brittany Harrell

Ethan Harvey
ethansharvey@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 Ethan Harvey and I am a voter in Wichita. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

Big government has no business telling our schools what we can and cannot say. Freedom of speech includes preferred pronouns. Right now, Republican constituents are being told that you are "making government smaller, less invasive in our lives, more freedom." Those are nothing but empty lies if we are seriously considering using the government to legislate what people can think and say.

Kansas students have the right to be addressed by their gender-affirming names and pronouns, and schools SHOULD be legally obligated to respect their gender identity, even if their name or gender marker hasn't been legally updated. Denying this could lead to violations of Title IX and the Equal Protection Clause, contributing to harassment and discrimination. We should be fighting for more privacy and freedom, not less.

A bill targeting this could breach student privacy, endanger their safety, and lead to unnecessary litigation. Similar bills and movements already have. Saying yes would also burden schools with enforcement challenges and potentially harm teachers and educational professionals—which is the point. Politicians should stop interfering with students' rights and educators' ability to create safe learning environments just so they can further their desires for for-profit private schools.

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.

Will Haynes
willhaynes1983@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 Will Haynes and I am a voter in Lawrence, Douglas County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on SB 76.

This bill is a blatant attempt to infringe upon the rights of students, teachers, school staff, and parents of students. It constitutes an attack not only upon trans people, but everyone, because it opens the door to a police state in which free speech and other personal rights can be curtailed merely because they make other people uncomfortable. Legislators should use their power to protect the rights of all, not merely a politically motivated group of zealots who are ignorant and fearful of change. Bills like this one make America a laughingstock in the eyes of the developed world. Most of you are Republicans and claim to believe in small government and personal responsibility; how, then, can you support a measure that would intrude government into schools, infringe upon the right of free speech, and encourage an atmosphere of fear and bullying in schools, where all students, teachers, and staff should feel welcome, accepted, and safe. Please look deep within yourselves and ask why trans people seem to constitute such a threat to some other people. Why is that? Why can't we just let people be who they feel they are?

In the name of our rights as Kansans and as Americans, I urge you to reject hate and fear and vote no on SB 76. Thank you.

Ashleigh Heldstab
aheldstab@outlook.com
Private citizen
2/10/2025

OPPONENT

Chairman Erickson and members of the committee, thank you for giving me a moment to share my thoughts on SB 76. My name is Ashleigh and I am a voter in Johnson County. I am writing today to strongly encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

Every Kansas student has the right to use their chosen name and pronouns at school. Denying these rights could go against Title IX and the equal protections clause of the Constitution. Denying this right could lead to bullying for the student as well as increased psychological damage possibly leading to self-harm for the student. And this denial would be done why? To what benefit to Kansans?! I went by a different name throughout most of my primary school and this right is owed to every student. This bill would be virtually impossible for teachers and other school personnel to follow strictly and would likely lead to increased administrative costs. For a school system already lacking in funds, this would be more detrimental to hiring and keeping good teachers. My son is almost school age, and if I can't count on a good education for my son, I'm not above moving to a state more focused on quality education.

Once again, thank you for your time. Again, please vote NO on the passage of SB 76. Thank you.

Jory Hennelly
jorylmick@gmail.com
Private citizen
2/7/2025

Opponent

Chairman Erickson and Members of the Committee, My name is Jory and I am a voter in Johnson County, Shawnee. 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. Students' interests in privacy and safety are closely related to their rights to be referred to by names and pronouns consistent with gender identity.

Please vote no on Sb 76. Thank you.

Opponent Testimony of SB 76

For the Senate Education Committee

February 10, 2025

Maegan Hepburn

Private Citizen

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony against Senate Bill 76. I am writing today on behalf of my child. My child has, since a very young age, questioned their gender. They did not see themselves in peers. I worked hard to get curious with my child to understand these feelings and even challenge them, while doing my best not to come across as rejecting my child or their feelings. As my child has grown, they have become more aware of themselves and more able to articulate their feelings and gender expression. My child was able to openly tell me that they identify as transgender. My child's father and I are divorced. My child initially was able to come out to their father as well and was accepted, but later their father chose to reject their identity. Unfortunately, this means that my child is able to be their comfortable self with me but must adopt an identity at their father's home that feels wholly incorrect. For now, my child and I are able to make peace that things are different at each house. Their father and I coparent as best as we can. If Senate Bill 76 were to be adopted, which parent would give consent to the school to use which name? Which parent would get the final say? I feel that this bill would introduce legal barriers to what is already a delicate situation. I also feel that a person who is 18 is a legal adult and should be able to make their own choices. To me it makes absolutely no sense that a high school senior or college student would have to get their parents permission to use what feels comfortable. Many college students use that time in their lives to explore their identity and become more independent. Forcing a college student to go back to their parents and get permission for something so small as a preferred name degrades independence. We want young people to grow, flourish, and hopefully support themselves. A college student is (usually) an adult and they can choose to share their preferred name with their parent or parents. If they choose not to, it is likely for reasons of safety or being ready to share that part of themselves. If a college student is not ready but wants to share, they should be allowed to do so on their own timeline. If a college student feels unsafe sharing, it would be irresponsible of the college to force them to do so – as unsafe as forcing an abuse victim to reach out to their abuser. If a college student feels unsafe sharing their gender identity with their parent but still has contact with that parent, that means that student hopes to

maintain a connection with that parent. They are actively working to share what they can of their life with that parent and keep the peace. At best, forcing a college student to share could result in their parents' indifference, at worst, it could result in complete rejection or violence.

Please do not inject unnecessary government interference in our students' relationships with their families.

Respectfully,

Maegan Hepburn.

Amy Hill
amykfrost@yahoo.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 with you today. My name is Amy Hill and I live in Olathe. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

Using the name and pronouns a child has requested is important for their safety and their confidence. Research has shown that if a transgender child has just one adult in their life who listens and respects them they are less likely to consider suicide.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people aged 10 to 14, and the third leading cause of death among 15-24 year olds (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2022). Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and questioning (LGBTQ+) young people are at significantly increased risk.

You don't have to agree with or understand the name or pronouns someone chooses but please don't take away someone else's ability to be supportive of kids who are finding their way. One adult respecting a child and who they are could be life saving.

Thank you for your time. Please vote no on SB 76.

Opponent Testimony of SB 76

For the Senate Education Committee

February 10, 2025

Elijah Hill

Private Citizen

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony against Senate Bill 76. My name is Elijah Hill, I am twenty years old, and I am a transgender man. I have been out as trans since high school and it has made such a positive impact in my life. I truly believe that I would not be alive right now if I hadn't had such amazing support from my friends, family, and teachers. Before I came out, my mental health was at an all time low. I was depressed, often having suicidal ideations, and I was self harming almost every day. Everytime I looked in the mirror or was addressed as "she" I could feel my stomach turning and I honestly wanted to just vanish from the world. I decided I needed to come out and was scared of what my life might look like if I did. But I knew I couldn't keep living as someone I wasn't. I told my mom and she was so loving and accepting. My friends started calling me Eli, and I started to feel more like me. I felt happier. My junior year I sent emails to all of my teachers before classes started, saying that I was using a different name and pronouns. It made my high school experience an indescribable amount better. Again, I do not think I would be alive if I hadn't.

I'm very fortunate to have been welcomed and supported as I was, but I also know many people who are not as fortunate. According to a study done at the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law, '81% of transgender adults in the U.S. have thought about suicide, 42% of transgender

adults have attempted it, and 56% have engaged in non-suicidal self-injury over their lifetimes.’

The unnecessary hate that some people have towards the LGBTQ+ community is horrifying. I guarantee that this senate bill will cause those numbers to skyrocket. This senate bill is not only discrimination in and of itself, but it promotes it. This senate bill is telling people, “hey, it’s okay to humiliate and belittle people because they are different.”

I cannot imagine the life I have now if I hadn’t come out. Just because people are different than you or I, does not mean we should hate them. Everyone is human. We do not understand most things, and that’s okay. All we can do is try. We can love one another and accept that people will be who they are.

I thank you for your time.

Amy Hinrichs
aloramy.hinrichs@yahoo.com
Private Citizen
2/7/2025

Opponent

I am writing to voice my opposition to bills SB 76. How we address each other matters. It is a sign of respect and civility.

According to an article in the University of Texas News, "Researchers interviewed transgender youths ages 15 to 21 and asked whether young people could use their chosen name at school, home, work and with friends. Compared with peers who could not use their chosen name in any context, young people who could use their name in all four areas experienced 71 percent fewer symptoms of severe depression, a 34 percent decrease in reported thoughts of suicide and a 65 percent decrease in suicidal attempts."

As a person of faith, I am deeply concerned about statics like this. This bill brings an increased chance of depression and suicide when we should be doing all we can to honor and uplift our young people.

Religion teaches us to care about our neighbor. I'm asking you to care for our young people, and please vote no on bill SB 76.

Katelyn Hlavaty
katelynhlavaty@gmail.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. My name is Katelyn Jade Hlavaty and I am a voter in Lawrence, Douglas County, Kansas. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

I believe legislators should vote NO against this bill for myriad reasons. I believe this bill would be difficult to enforce, would put undo burden on our teachers to try to know the exact birth name and sex of each student in their classrooms, would open our educators up to undo threat of litigation from people "overhearing an incorrect name or pronoun" being used, and would only seek to encourage the harassment of students in the LGBT+ community in schools.

When I was a child, my friends and I cycled through all kinds of names for each other at school, regardless of our gender. Chris was common for Christine or Katherine, Jerry for Geraldine, Ash for Ashley. Would those in support of this bill truly seek to waste our already overworked teacher's time by having them correct us, restrict our ability to call ourselves what we wanted, simply because we "didn't look like we should be called" those names? Because of what our society believes males and females should look like, and be called? Why is the committee interested in violating our student's first amendment rights to go by whatever name they wish to be called? And how do they suggest that teachers and school administrators enforce this? If birth certificates are not readily available to be referenced, would it be based on the educator's best guess? Or would we be taking our students into bathrooms to "check"? I think if we follow this bill to it's logical conclusion, we can see how far of a government overreach it is onto our already overburdened educational system.

I am not a fool; I understand that this bill is simply another attempt to restrict and eliminate the rights of transgender Kansans. And I respect the rights of the individual members of the committee to believe whatever they wish in regards to why people are transgender. But I must draw the line at the members insisting that their own individual beliefs should become law when it infringes on our rights as citizens. Keep the government out of our personal, constitutionally protected choice to call ourselves whatever we want to be called. Our names are none of the Kansas government's business.

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 for your thoughtful consideration.

Courtney Jane Hochman
hochmancj@gmail.com
Private citizen
2/10/2015

Opponent

Members of the committee, I appreciate you taking the time to read my note. My name is Courtney Jane Hochman and I am a resident of Manhattan in Riley County. I am writing to ask that you vote no on SB 76.

I am a mother of three children- 15, 9, and 3. If you have children or have spent any amount of time with children then you know that their identity development comes in many stages over many ages. This is a bad bill that will limit youth. Having worked with youth in my community and having read many studies on supporting youth who may be trans or nonbinary, being affirming is one way to prevent self harm or even suicide. Allowing students to use an alternate name is one way to affirm their inclusion and create support between them and school personnel.

I thank you for your time and your service to our state. I hope you will vote no on SB 76.

JENNIFER R HOLT
jenholt1230@gmail.com
PRIVATE CITIZEN
2/6/2025

OPPONENT

My name is Jen Holt and I am a voter in Wichita/Sedgwick County. Please vote no on SB 76

SB 76 would be a distraction to the school day. If we are to keep in mind the percentage of students this involves, it is miniscule to the totality of the population. Giving people the opportunity for monetary gains to accuse someone in the administration of using a nickname, is counterintuitive to districts that are already on budget constraints. I for one do not want to spend my tax dollars on this. I think the topic of gender and pronouns has been villainized by a loud minority and we need to just stop the madness. Let the schools focus on educating our children with the resources they have and let parents get involved directly with the administration if there is an issue of children being offended in regard to the use or non use of pronouns and nicknames. Someone has to use some common sense, take a deep breath and slow everyone involved on this topic down. We are pushing too hard in one direction. Will you please consider blocking SB 76 simply on the merits of government overreach and the probability of it not being managed well even if it does pass? I have friends and colleagues with opinions from one extreme to the other but something most of us can agree on is that it should be handled case by case, with the teachers and administrators. Please keep this in mind when voting for this bill and vote no.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration. Again, please vote no on SB 76

Veronica Holtz
veronicaleeholtz@gmail.com
Private citizen
2/10/2025

opponent

Chairman Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for taking the time to listen to my thoughts on SB 76. My name is Veronica Holtz and I am a voter in Wichita, KS. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76

Kansans should have the right to be called by their preferred name. Should a man named "Michael" not be called "Mike"? Should a woman named Joanna not go by "Jo"? What about when children have inherited a family name and prefer to go by a middle name? Where does it end? Why do you insist on pushing your views on others? This isn't a nanny state!

Thank you for allowing me the space to share my thoughts on SB 76. Again, I encourage you all to vote no on this bill, lest we all lose our collective minds.

Elayne Howard
elaynevr2016@gmail.com
Private Citizen
2/5/2025

Opponent

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

I have friends and family SB 76 will negatively impact. I implore you to think of your own family members and imagine the damage bullying them, legally, would do to them. History shows us what passing a bill like this will cause in the near future. Please take the innocent into consideration when passing bills which will only cause harm.

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.

Greg Howard
Gregithoward@gmail.com
Private citizen
2/6/2025

Opponent

Thank you for reading my testimony on SB 76. My name is Greg Howard and I live and vote in Merriam and Johnson County Kansas. I am writing to encourage a vote of NO on SB 76.

I believe every American should oppose SB 76 on the basis that conversations should not be policed in a society that values free speech. Enforcing these laws can lead to a slippery slope of control over our speech.

I personally am against this bill as I believe everyone should have the right to themselves. I do not want the government playing a role in social appearances.

I coach youth soccer and see kids aged 2-14 every day. They come to practice after being stuck in schools all day with energy, excitement, frustration, and personalities. Every day at school they must follow rules, be polite, pay attention, listen, and learn. Some days they come to practice completely burned out from living up to those expectations all day. If they have to meet those expectations while also hiding themselves, all of that frustration and exhaustion will be brought even more into my practices. I always try to show them mercy and compassion. I would like my practices to continue to be focused on soccer rather than comforting kids after long days of being told to change.

Thank you for all your work in setting the rules of our society. I implore you to vote no on SB 76 to protect our freedom. Thank you.

Hannah Howard
hannahhoward916@gmail.com
Private Citizen
2/10/2025

OPPONENT

Thank you for taking time to hear my thoughts on SB 76. My name is Hannah Howard, and I am a resident of Merriam, Kansas who works for a youth-serving non-profit. I am writing today to encourage you to vote NO on SB 76.

I'm deeply concerned about the overreach of this bill, and I believe it would impact teachers' ability to provide quality education to students. I'm particularly worried that this bill places an added burden on staff. Educators would feel fearful of being interrogated or falsely accused, all while trying to manage an already overwhelming workload.

My second concern is that the legal actions taken against teachers who are accused of using children's names and pronouns would affect all youth. This would divert time and resources away from crucial services. As someone currently working in a nonprofit that serves youth, I can attest to how severe the mental health crisis among students really is. We have children from all backgrounds coming to our programs struggling with extreme anxiety, and some even expressing suicidal thoughts. This bill is a significant overstep of government interference in the lives of teachers. Educators do not have time or money to be involved in litigation and instead need to focus on supporting the mental health and cognitive development of their students.

Additionally, state-level anti-transgender laws just like this increased past year-suicide attempts up to 72% among transgender and nonbinary youth (Nature Human Behavior). These young people already face significant disparities in health and education, including higher rates of violence and discrimination at school, when compared to their peers. I believe all children have a right to live full and abundant lives. Bills like this put young people's safety at high risk and directly lead to more suicide attempts.

In conclusion, this overreach of government power would hinder educators' ability to effectively do their jobs. If passed, it would divert vital resources away from student support services, ultimately harming every student.

I encourage you to vote no on SB 76. Thank you.

Ruth Howard
rehoward 55@gmail.com
PRIVATE CITIZEN
2/10/2025

Opponent

My name is Ruthi Howard and I am a voter in Butler County/Augusta. I am writing today to encourage and plead with the committee to vote NO on SB 76. The name and/or pronoun a child is called in school has NOTHING to do with the US GOVERNMENT!!! It is a personal choice of the student. There are thousands of people that use a nickname or middle name — NOT their given birth name. Such as my name is Ruth. I have gone by Ruthi my entire life. My sister's name is Mary Kathleen and has always gone by Kathy. That is NO DIFFERENT than Noah wanting to be called Nora. If a trans child/student has to be called by the name on their birth certificate then SO DO ALL STUDENTS!!! And again IT IS NOT THE SCHOOLS' BUSINESS. And more importantly it is NOT Donald Trumps business.

Please vote NO on SB 76. Our world/country/government has SOOO MANY more important issues to deal with (like homeless and/or abused children) than what name or pronoun to call a transgender student or adult!!

Thank you for hearing my thoughts and concerns on this bill. I encourage you ALL to PLEASE VOTE NO on the passage of SB 76!! Let's try to HELP these LGBTQ children not cause them more grief and hardship. Thank you!!

Thea Howard
thealaurenhd@gmail.com
Private Citizen
2/6/2025

opponent

Chairman Erickson and Members of the Committee. Thank you for this time to share my thoughts on SB76. My name is Thea Howard, I am a voter in Wichita in Sedgwick County. I am writing to you as a concerned life-long Kansan who worries both about the immediate impact and long lasting implications of Senate Bill 76 (SB 76), which will be going before the Public Health and Welfare Committee on January 28.

First, let me start by saying that it is quite embarrassing and laughable that a bill written by elected officials in this state would claim to protect free speech by forbidding specific speech and expression.

It is also embarrassing to once again see another bill in Kansas that completely ignores the preponderance of evidence and support among medical and mental health experts that supports social transition for youth.

Quite frankly, it is not the government's business what I choose to call myself or how I dress. Likewise, it's not the government's business what anyone chooses to be called or how they dress.

Rather than supporting this bill, I would encourage this committee to work on creating bills that support and protect ALL of its students and teachers, rather than bills that target and vilify them.

Trans and non-binary students are your constituents as well and for their sake, I ask you to vote no on the passage of SB76. Thank you for your time.

Opponent Testimony of SB 76
For the Senate Education Committee
February 10, 2025
Finn Howell
Private Citizen

My name is Finn Howell and I am a transgender high school student. I am writing this today in hope of making a change. I do not agree with the passing of SB 76. Not only will this bill change the rules for transgender students, but cisgender students as well. I am here to focus on how it will affect each party. When it comes to cisgender students, it may affect their ability to go by a preferred nickname, such as a shorter version of their own. In that regard it may cause discomfort, or confusion if there are multiple students with that same name.

As for transgender students, this could be detrimental. As a transgender student myself, I am beyond lucky that my parents support the use of my chosen name. Some students are not so lucky in this regard, or may be closeted to their family due to safety or other similar reasons. These students should not have to suffer further, when school may be their only escape to be who they truly are. Prior to being in a public highschool, I attended a Catholic school from pre-k through eighth grade, and can voice from my experiences first hand how it feels to be forced into the closet and how it feels for the voice of who you are to be pushed into silence. As a person your name is a powerful thing, but for trans people this is even more so. I am further concerned about trans suicide rates. Being transgender is already so difficult and it can feel like the whole world is against you but you don't understand why. Trans kids are only trying to survive, the passing of this bill will make it so much more difficult.

I hope this reaches somebody, or is able to change someone's mind. I could write pages and pages about my experiences as a trans person, and how difficult it is. I can not stress enough how hard it is to exist in peace without harassment or hatred of who you are being shoved in your direction. I can not understand how any person could want this. I am a trans student. I only want to be who I am, the same way everyone else is allowed to be who they are, and go by their own name. This bill will not help anybody, it will only bring harm towards transgender children. I hope whoever may read this understands the harm this bill will cause, and works towards a friendlier world for transgender students and people.

Opponent SB 76
For the Senate Education Committee
February 10, 2025
Jennifer Hrabe
Private Citizen

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

My name is Jenny Hrabe. I live in Overland Park, KS with my husband and two young girls. I am a licensed master social worker with many years of experience working in hospitals, youth organizations, and my county's mental health center. I currently work in a hospital, lead two Girl Scout troops and serve on a county board.

I have worked with trans and non binary kids and adults, and my best friend is currently raising a trans child.

Recent Data indicate that 82% of transgender individuals have considered killing themselves and 40% have attempted suicide, with suicidality highest among transgender youth. I can tell you firsthand from my experience and my colleagues experiences, the data reflects the reality. Doctors and social workers, therapists and well meaning parents will tell you that a safe and loving environment for these kids increases their wellbeing, just like it would for any other child. When you deny a person's right to choose their name and their gender identity, you deny them the right to live their core truth, you violate their free speech and their right to self autonomy. Complying by a law like this would be a violation to my profession's code of ethics, which mandates that I do no harm and honor individual autonomy.

Through this bill, we would create an environment that even further isolates and stigmatizes these children and young adults at school. A bill like this enshrines discrimination and hate towards a very vulnerable population.

We need to teach all children tolerance and empathy towards those who are different from them. If we ignore or erase the differences in others, then there is no room in our minds for tolerance, and this breeds hate which breeds violence. This bill harms everyone, not just transgender persons.

I encourage you to please listen to social workers, teachers and healthcare providers who have been working with transgender populations for years. I encourage you to try your very best to

open your mind and hear from families raising these kids and learn from their experiences. The world is not more dangerous because of trans persons, in fact they have always existed. The brave families that are raising their kids are teaching these children and those around them acceptance and unconditional love. No one is trying to harm their child. I urge you to please do not support this bill.

Thank you

Source:

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32345113/>

Hunter Houck
hhouck514@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 with you today. My name is Hunter Houck and I am a voter in Americus (Lyon County). I am writing to urge you to vote NO on SB 76.

First of all, this bill is not necessary. It is part of a culture war against Transgender people, who are among the most vulnerable Kansans. Transgender people, as with all people, deserve the right to self-determination. This includes students using the name of their choice.

Secondly, this bill is dangerous. Should this bill become law, it will harm students who are victims of bullying because they are transgender, or use a nickname other than a "derivative" of their name as described in this legislation. For many students, school is a safe space where they can be themselves around friends. This bill will take that space away for the most vulnerable youth in our state.

Again, I want to thank you for reading my testimony against this legislation. Please, do not further this attack on self-expression in Kansas and vote AGAINST SB 76. Thank you.

Opponent SB 76
For the Senate Education Committee
February 10, 2025
Jennifer Hrabe
Private Citizen

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

My name is Jenny Hrabe. I live in Overland Park, KS with my husband and two young girls. I am a licensed master social worker with many years of experience working in hospitals, youth organizations, and my county's mental health center. I currently work in a hospital, lead two Girl Scout troops and serve on a county board.

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Through this bill, we would create an environment that even further isolates and stigmatizes these children and young adults at school. A bill like this enshrines discrimination and hate towards a very vulnerable population.

We need to teach all children tolerance and empathy towards those who are different from them. If we ignore or erase the differences in others, then there is no room in our minds for tolerance, and this breeds hate which breeds violence. This bill harms everyone, not just transgender persons.

I encourage you to please listen to social workers, teachers and healthcare providers who have been working with transgender populations for years. I encourage you to try your very best to

open your mind and hear from families raising these kids and learn from their experiences. The world is not more dangerous because of trans persons, in fact they have always existed. The brave families that are raising their kids are teaching these children and those around them acceptance and unconditional love. No one is trying to harm their child. I urge you to please do not support this bill.

Thank you

Source:

<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32345113/>

Opponent Testimony of SB76
For the Senate Education Committee
Feb. 7-8, 2025
Kyle Hutson
Private Citizen

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opposition testimony against Senate Bill 76

I am writing as the parent of two adult transgender individuals and a former school board member.

The reasoning given for this bill is, and I quote “Employees of school districts and postsecondary educational institutions do not shed their constitutional rights to freedom of speech or expression at work”. However it does exactly the opposite. It restricts the freedom of speech, and in fact criminalizes the speech, of good teachers who are providing the best school experience for all of their students. These teachers, who would now be criminalized, are showing empathy to otherwise marginalized students. A study from the Williams Institute at UCLA School of Law finds that 81% of transgender adults in the U.S. have thought about suicide, 42% of transgender adults have attempted it, and 56% have engaged in non-suicidal self-injury over their lifetimes [1]. A study shows that teenage suicide rates increased by 72% in years following anti-transgender laws, like this bill [2]. While many may wish that my children not exist at all, it is heinous to wish increased suicide rates on any group of people.

Allow me to quote from the Kansas GOP Platform. “Local control should be preferred and considered when enacting laws and regulations, larger government units should not interfere with local, more efficient and responsive solutions. [3]” These issues should be left up to school boards. The only reason for this legislation to exist is to bully and further marginalize an already-marginalized group. Not only does this legislation bully them, but it also legalizes bullying of this group by others.

Showing kindness to another person should not be illegal. Legislating unkindness, and let’s be clear, that’s exactly what this is, is reprehensible.

[1] Source: <https://williamsinstitute.law.ucla.edu/press/transpop-suicide-press-release/> - accessed 02/06/2025

[2] Source <https://www.npr.org/sections/shots-health-news/2024/09/25/nx-s1-5127347/more-trans-teens-attempted-suicide-after-states-passed-anti-trans-laws-a-study-shows> - accessed 02/06/2025

[3] Source https://www.kansas.gov/files/ugd/86d4ff_87878bebd96f4abf8e105b653010c128.pdf - accessed 02/06/2025

OPPONENT WRITTEN ONLY TESTIMONY

SB 76

Senate Education Committee

Hearing: Monday, February 10, 2025

Mendy Hutson

Private Citizen

Chair Erickson and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony against Senate Bill 76.

I am a lifelong Kansan, an educator, and a family member and friend to transgender and non-binary individuals. It is with these perspectives in mind that I must express my strong opposition to the bill.

My entire life, as I've been an observer of Kansas politics, I understood that Kansans value freedom for families and communities to maintain local control and make decisions that are in the best interest of the community. It is a comfort that many Kansans enjoy, and take pride in, that we steer clear of national political chaos and gamesmanship in favor of steady and reasonable governing that aims to serve and respect all Kansans. Most Kansas towns, counties, and communities represent a variety of ideologies and values. We are not a monolith. In light of this shared value, I oppose SB 76 because it strips local schools, administrators, teachers, families, and school boards of their control within their communities to make decisions that are informed by best practices, research, and individual needs. This bill shifts control away from communities and those individuals who are directly impacted. There are already processes in place to help educators, students, families, and school leaders determine what is in the best interest of students on a case by case basis, and this bill would interfere with local schools' stakeholders ability to implement best practices.

As an educator, I know from experience that students learn best when they experience acceptance and are respected as individuals. This bill would create unnecessary barriers to learning and create an environment of hostility for students. This bill undermines teachers who receive all students without judgment and forces teachers to engage in a power struggle with transgender and non-binary students. Not only does this harm the transgender or non-binary student, but it also harms all students as they observe a peer being disregarded and disrespected by an adult. This will either create friction between all students and the teacher, creating an environment that is hostile for learning, or it will model for students that it is acceptable to disrespect their transgender and non-binary peers, leading to further normalizing of bullying and discrimination.

This bill is problematic as it provides protections for those who misgender and deadname students but does not offer protection for teachers who opt not to engage in these dehumanizing practices and the resultant power struggle. This sets the stage for discriminatory practices in which some staff or students are given preference and protections that are denied others. My hope is that bills introduced to our legislature would be without prejudice or favoritism and

instead consider all students and educators. This bill does not meet that standard, nor could it, as these matters should be entrusted to the local community to work out, rather than a blanket piece of over-reaching legislation.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my perspective as an educator and as a concerned citizen.

Sincerely,

Mendy Hutson

Robin Imbeau
robinheatwole@att.net
PRIVATE CITIZEN
2/10/2025

OPPONENT

I would like to thank the Chair and Members of the Committee for the opportunity to share my thoughts on SB 76. My name is Robin Imbeau and I am a registered voter in Lawrence, KS. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

I am highly concerned about the broad overreach of SB 76. This bill would put our public employees' free speech at risk. This issue is very important to me because the members of my immediate family all work in the public school system. When they hear a student wishes to be called by a name other than what is on the roster, they simply respect the student's wishes. If Nicholas wants to be called Nick, no problem. If Elizabeth wants to be called Liza, no problem. If Max wants to be called Maxine, there is no problem there either. The school day continues as usual. Calling students by their preferred names is simply a show of respect. Why should transgender students not be afforded the same respect as their peers?

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

Opposition Testimony for SB 76

For the Senate Education Committee

February 7, 2025

Andrew Johannesen

Dear Members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am writing this with the strongest opposition of SB 76.

For the past decades I have been on both sides of the classroom many times. Both as a pupil and educator, it has become tangibly clear that student success hinges on mutual respect between teacher and taught. This classroom respect is wholly contingent on politeness and following the basic wishes of both teacher and student.

This bill seeks to restrict language used by teachers to be dictated wholly by parents and birth certificates. This constraint directly undermines the capacity to build rapport with and earn trust of students. At a time when the fate of our public education hangs in the balance, undermining this trust demonstrates a distinct lack of care for the success of students.

Each relationship between student and teacher is personal and unique. **The decision of language to use regarding naming and pronoun use should be left to each individual relationship.** I speak on this as one who has had to work hard to forge bonds with students to help grow their success.

I am additionally concerned at the explicit invitation to legal action against educators based on their language. This is a deeply concerning restriction on the first amendment rights of citizens, regardless of the framing in the bill's introduction.

Finally, the majority of postsecondary education students are fully fledged adults independent of their parents. The proposition that these adults would need permission slips from their parents in order to *allow* speech of educators is bizarre and not in keeping with the mission of education.

I sincerely hope that you will do right by students and educators by opposing this bill.

Sincerely,

Dr. Andrew Johannesen

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew Johannesen', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Dear Senators and fellow Kansans,

I am submitting testimony in opposition to senate bill 76.

I work with students at Lawrence High School and am the parent of one of them.

As a staff member, I do everything I can to earn the trust and respect of those I work with so that I can effectively help them craft a successful future. This mutual respect includes abiding by the social contract between teacher and student where politeness and respecting each others' wishes forms the foundation of understanding between pupil and authority. Each relationship between student and teacher is individual, and the decisions of naming and pronoun use should be left to each individual relationship.

As a parent, I rely heavily on teachers here supporting my child's social and academic development by addressing him the way he chooses to be addressed, by the name and pronouns of *HIS* choice, not mine, not his teachers', not the government. This is a choice I as his parent allow him to make. I should continue to have that freedom, and this bill flies in the face of that freedom.

This legislation flagrantly undermines my colleagues' and my ability to build that respect with students and care for my child's well-being and academic success. This legislation comes at a time when education hangs so precariously in the balance, legislation prohibiting the speech of teachers is not at all where the focus should be and betrays a deep lack of care for students.

The timing of this legislation is also extremely suspect. I heard about this legislation 24 hours before the testimony was due. This to me shows a lack of interest in the opinions of the actual people it would affect and a damning indictment of how out of touch the individuals that put this bill together are. I strongly urge you to oppose SB 76.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Rena Johnson

Feb. 7, 2025

Regarding Kansas Senate Bill 76

I am writing as a teacher and mother in opposition to SB76, as an individual and not representing any group or district.

This bill seeks to criminalize educators like me for using names and pronouns that students themselves request, that best match their sense of self. When I get to know my students each new semester, the first and most basic thing I learn is how to say their names.

What could be more simple, kind, and respectful than calling a person by the name they want to be called? Standing in the way of that separates me from my students and makes it harder for me to form positive relationships and effectively teach them. Students do not learn well from teachers they don't trust, and refusing to call someone by their name is a sure way to sabotage trust.

In addition, this bill references students' birth certificates, which schools don't even regularly collect - nor should we. We have plenty of other ways to establish students' names, ages, and addresses, which is what we really need. Making all school employees legally responsible for information

from students' birth certificates will unnecessarily expose these private documents to public review, creating other unrelated and unforeseen problems. In this age of rampant identity theft, why would we want to force school districts to manage and safeguard birth certificates?

Finally, as a mother, I am against this bill. Parents, colleagues, classmates, and other bystanders are not "harmed" when my child's teacher calls them by their preferred name and pronouns. Quite the contrary, my child is harmed when educators are too afraid to do so lest they be found liable. If you pass this bill, you will be creating a situation of fear and coercion in public schools. My child's teachers, counselors, aides, and others would likely be unwilling to use their chosen name and pronouns even if I give written permission, due to the risk of criminal charges and loss of licensure. This would create an environment of mistrust in what should be an educational safe haven. It would undermine our relationships with their educators.

Respectfully,

Elissa Jones, Topeka, KS

To: Senate Education Committee (S.Education@senate.ks.gov)
From: Lora Jost, Lawrence, KS

WRITTEN PUBLIC TESTIMONY
Feb. 7, 2025

Dear Education Committee,

Do not support SB 76. This legislation is absurd and cruel and will hurt staff and students. The Kansas legislature should instead put their time and energy into funding public education and making sure that staff and students are respected and supported in the ways they want and need to be.

Sincerely,
Lora Jost
Lawrence, KS