

Tracy Nguyen
nguyen.tracyv@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 Tracy Nguyen and I am a voter in Sedgwick County/Wichita. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76

This bill is discriminatory, over-reaching, and is cruel to children by encouraging bullying based on gender identity. Furthermore, it blatantly seeks to erase the existence of transgender people in educational institutions. It will be disruptive to classrooms and damaging to the goals of creating a safe educational environment.

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.

Joseph Nicholas
joseph.h.nicholas@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 Joseph Nicholas and I am a voter in Leawood. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

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 Joseph Nicholas and I am a voter in Leawood.

I am writing to express my strong opposition to SB 76, which would prohibit school employees from using a student's chosen name and pronouns. This bill is not only disrespectful and dehumanizing to transgender students, but it also raises serious constitutional concerns, particularly under the First Amendment.

At its core, SB 76 inserts government overreach into personal identity by forcing educators to ignore a student's expressed identity. This is not about education, safety, or fairness—this is about singling out and stigmatizing a vulnerable group of young people. Schools should be places of learning, growth, and support, not environments where students are stripped of their dignity.

Furthermore, compelling school employees to intentionally misgender students contradicts the very principles of respect and ethical conduct that we expect from educators. It also exposes schools to potential legal liability, as similar policies have been struck down or challenged in other states for violating students' rights.

Most fundamentally, I believe in treating people the way they want to be treated. A student's gender identity is a deeply personal matter, and it is not the government's business to interfere in this way. I urge this committee to reject SB 76 and instead focus on policies that support all Kansas students, regardless of gender identity.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Opponent of SB 76
For the Senate Education Committee
February 10, 2025
Mindy Nickles
Kansas Educator

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to SB 76. My name is Mindy Nickles, and I'm a 5th-grade teacher in Lawrence, Kansas. I had a unique path to teaching. I originally studied Microbiology at Kansas State, working on vaccine research, but it was always education that truly called to me. As a child, school was my safe place, and I wanted to create that same safe, welcoming environment for others. My love of learning drove me to become a teacher, and it's a role I take seriously.

Growing up, I always dreaded the first day of school. While I go by "Mindy" in all areas of life, my birth certificate says "Melinda." I hated having to ask every teacher to call me Mindy—it was a constant reminder that my identity wasn't reflected in my official records. Thankfully, every teacher I had accepted "Mindy" without question. They didn't challenge me or ask my parents for permission. Instead, they listened to me and respected who I was. That simple act of acknowledgment made, and still makes, all the difference. To this day, when I'm called "Melinda," it feels wrong, like someone else is being addressed.

SB 76 would take that basic respect away from many students, including students who are questioning their identity. It would force educators like me to ignore students' identities and deny them the validation they need to feel safe. These children are at a stage where they're beginning to form their sense of self and understanding of the world around them, and it's crucial that they have support as they navigate this process. When students don't feel safe or accepted, it directly affects their ability to focus, engage, and learn. A lack of safety in the classroom creates an environment where students are distracted by fear or anxiety, preventing them from reaching their full potential. I oppose SB 76 because it directly interferes with my ability to do my

job—to educate and support ALL students. My classroom should be a place where all children feel safe to be themselves and to learn without fear of rejection.

I urge you to vote NO on SB 76.

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express concerns about SB76. The bill has glaring problems that will waste substantial court resources on resolving litigation stemming from these issues. I also strongly disagree with how this bill will impact children in our state. I urge the legislature to reconsider the wisdom of bills like this and shift its focus to addressing real problems Kansans are facing.

First, this bill purports to protect the freedom of speech of “employees of school districts and postsecondary educational institutions,” but the actual effect of the bill is to restrict speech. The First Amendment of the United States Constitution prohibits laws “abridging the freedom of speech.” It mentions nothing about an exception for speech incongruent with the ideology of the party currently in power. This bill, however, not only protects the “right” of educational professionals to disregard students’ preferred names and pronouns; it also abridges such professionals’ right to refer to students in the manner the students prefer. This obviously contravenes the First Amendment. It will undoubtedly draw significant litigation, costing the state of Kansas far more in court and litigation costs than any possible benefits could justify.

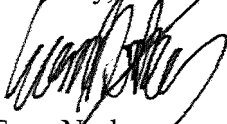
Second, the bill prohibits any instance of addressing a student with certain names or pronouns, and it makes no mention of intentionality or knowingness. That means that, as written, the bill treats accidental, unknowing, and intentional instances of such conduct exactly the same way. A teacher could be sued for forgetting a student’s name under this bill. Lawsuits could result from teachers guessing a student’s gender incorrectly, even for students who are not transgender. For example, a teacher who sees a short-haired female student from a distance, mistakes her for a boy, and calls him “he” is liable to be sued. Further, consider identical twins. If a teacher has twins in their class, a teacher subject to this bill cannot ever refer mistake one twin for the other without opening him or herself to lawsuits from the parents of every student in the class. This obviously extends far beyond the intent of the legislature, and it will prompt wasteful litigation.

Third, the bill creates a private cause of action available to anyone “harmed” by a violation of the bill. The bill does not define “harm.” Because the bill does not define harm, its scope is entirely unclear. That issue will have to be resolved through expensive litigation.

Finally, this bill is pointlessly cruel to not only LGBGQ+ students but also to students who use nicknames their parents do not like. Part of childhood is exploring one’s individuality, and that sometimes can mean trying out new names. The government is not meant to ensure parents know about every single name their children might use. This bill tramples the liberty of Kansans to a far greater extent than it promotes any legitimate government interest.

Accordingly, I urge the legislature to vote against this bill. The legislature should not be spending its time on this. The legislature should be taking steps to address Kansans’ material needs.

Sincerely,



Evan Norkey

Rebecca Obold-Geary
oboldgea@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 concern and opposition to SB 76. My name is Rebecca Obold-Geary and I am a voter in Johnson County.

As a Kansas public school teacher and an ally of the trans community including youth in my family I am extremely concerned. First, trans people deserve respect and dignity including the use of a preferred name and pronouns. Clearly, this bill does not support this.

Second, as a teacher, my job is to teach. This is how time should be used. It is an educator's responsibility to ensure a safe and welcoming environment for learning. This bill does not provide for such an environment.

Third, this bill likely violates Title IX and the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution.

In addition, educators should not be at risk for such litigation. This bill is highly unenforceable and may likely over burden educational staff with frivolous litigation.

Thank you again for taking the time to hear from concerned Kansas residents in opposition to SB 76. I urge you to vote no of the passage of SB 76. Thank you.

DAWN OLNEY
DAWNGTO@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 with you today. My name is Dawn Olney am a voter in Prairie Village. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

My cousin has a transgender daughter. My Republican, Trump-supporting aunt, who is her grandmother, told me that the child was always "that way." As a boy, he liked "girl toys, frilly things, pink glitter, My Little Pony." She knew and loved him as a male child, and continued to love her as a girl. My aunt's love never wavered. Politics never entered into her regard for her grandchild. My aunt has since passed away, but I am sure her heart would break because of legislative attacks on her grandchild.

A Youth Risk Behavior Survey in 2017 found 44% of transgender students reported considering suicide, and 34% reported a suicide attempt. Avery Jackson is a transgender girl who used to live in Kansas City before they decided Missouri was too hostile to her medical care and health. She and her family have tried to raise the issues transgender people face. Her father said:

"And the main reason that these children state that they try to harm themselves is the lack of love and support of their family and friends. My wife and I decided that we would much rather have a happy, healthy daughter than a dead son."

<https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2015/opinion/transgender-today/stories/avery-aj-jackson>

If people would let them simply live their lives with love and acceptance, transgender people would not come to the position where they would literally rather die than continue living in this society.

They have a medical diagnosis, gender dysphoria, and need support, not rejection. Trust the teams of physicians who study best practices and treat people with this diagnosis. I think you would agree doctors are best equipped to care for this diagnosis. Educators are simply trying to follow doctor's orders for these students.

This chilling bill would punish all our educational professionals if they make a transgender student feel safe and valued. Find some compassion for these people, and respect for the medical and educational communities caring for them. Vote NO on SB 76.

Thank you for reading my testimony, and taking it to heart. Please vote NO on SB 76. Thank you.

Dawn Olney

KINSEY OLSON
kinseyhubbardphoto@gmail.com
PRIVATE CITIZEN
2/10/2025

OPPONENT

Chairman Erickson and members of the committee, thank you for giving me the time to share my thoughts on SB 76. Im writing you to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

Blocking the passage of SB 76, a bill that not only strips students of their right to be recognized by their gender-affirming names and pronouns but also weaponizes the legal system against educators and students alike. This bill is an unnecessary and harmful overreach that prioritizes political agendas over the well-being, privacy, and safety of Kansas students.

Every student deserves to feel safe and respected in school. Denying transgender and gender-diverse students the right to be called by their affirmed names and pronouns is not just cruel—it directly contradicts existing legal protections under Title IX and the Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution. Courts across the country have affirmed that misgendering and deadnaming students can constitute gender-based harassment. Schools have an obligation to respect and protect their students, and SB 76 would force them to do the opposite.

Perhaps one of the most reckless aspects of SB 76 is its inclusion of a damages clause that allows anyone—even an uninvolved third party—to sue if they overhear a student or teacher using a name or pronoun inconsistent with the student's birth certificate. This invites frivolous litigation and places an impossible burden on schools and educators. Even if an educator wanted to comply perfectly, it would be virtually unenforceable—how would staff be expected to verify every student's birth certificate before addressing them? This bill sets schools up for costly lawsuits and administrative chaos, draining resources that should be used to educate and support students.

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

SB-76 Oral/Written Opponent Testimony

For the Senate Education Committee

2-10-2025

Gabriel Padilla, Private Citizen, KNEA Member

gabepadilla2016@gmail.com

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

My name is Gabriel Padilla, my pronouns are he/el. As a transgender man, I know how crucial it is to be called by your preferred name and pronouns. In high school, I went by a different name, and my teachers respected that decision, which gave me the space to be myself. This support played a key role in shaping the educator I am today. Just like anyone named William can go by Will or Bill without question, students deserve to be called the name they choose, regardless of their gender identity.

Research from the *Journal of Adolescent Health* underscores this importance—students who can use their chosen name in all aspects of their lives experience 71% fewer symptoms of severe depression, a 34% decrease in thoughts of suicide, and a 65% decrease in suicide attempts. These numbers are not just statistics; they represent the real impact on students' mental health and well-being.

As a high school math teacher in Wichita, I see firsthand how important it is to create a safe and supportive environment for all students. My job is to protect and treat students the way I would want to be treated—respectfully and with understanding. In Maslow's hierarchy of needs, safety is second only to physiological needs, and if we continue to take away educators' ability to create safe spaces, we put our students' well-being at risk. Every student deserves a classroom where they feel seen, valued, and supported, and that's what I strive to provide every day.

Please vote no to this bill as you are restricting the educators all over Kansas.

Opposition Testimony for SB 76
For the Senate Education Committee
February 10th, 2025
Nathaniel Page

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on SB 76.

My first concern is that the bill applies not only to minors, but also to students in general at least according to the current phrasing of the bill. This raises a grave concern that educators will have to refer to a fully emancipated adult by the name on their birth certificate and will still require the student's parents to give permission otherwise. As an individual who went back to college later than many of my classmates, I must say it seems asinine that I, should I choose to go by a name other than the one assigned at birth, would need to get the written permission of my parents even when I am into my mid-twenties.

This leads to my second concern with the bill. The bill only allows a student or minor's parents to provide written permission for the student to use a different name or pronouns. However, the bill does not provide for minors or students without living parents, or who are no longer under the guardianship of those parents. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, approximately 4% of children in the U.S. live without a parent in the household. Those children – and eventually adults – would not have any legal way of changing their preferred name according to the current phrasing of the bill. This is both impracticable and immoral. As someone whose family is only possible by adoption, I am continuously frustrated by the seeming ignorance of legislators toward the existence of non-traditional families in their bills.

Third, I am deeply confused by the damages clause included in the bill. While I understand that many bills include the ability to sue for declaratory or injunctive relief to establish rights, I am at a loss when trying to understand what damage a third party could possibly experience in overhearing another person be referred to by pronouns that do not align with the sex assigned to them at birth. There is no property damage, physical damage, and no reasonable person would experience emotional damages from a conversation to which they were neither a subject nor a party.

Fourth, I am concerned that the legislature has not considered what will happen in the near certainty that an educator or employee unknowingly refer to a student by a pronoun or a name not assigned to them at birth, whether this be through a slip of the tongue, unfamiliarity with the student whom they are addressing, or any other myriad of reasons why someone may mistakenly misname or misgender a student. Is that educator or employee violating the bill? Can they be sued based on a single mistake or only based on recurring patterns of behavior?

In summary, not only is this bill an attack on the First Amendment rights of educators' and employees' freedom of speech and minors' and students' freedom of expression, but it is also clear that this bill is incredibly vague and impossible to enforce. There are serious issues facing us in the state of Kansas, and the use of this legislature's time and resources to pass a bill with so little clarity is an insult to Kansans in every corner of this state. For that reason, I oppose Senate Bill 76 and believe that the legislature should get back to addressing the serious issues facing our state.

Respectfully,

Mr. Nathaniel Page

Julian Pando
trey5659@gmail.com
Private citizen
2/6/2025

Opponent

I would like to thank the committee for taking time to hear my thoughts as a private citizen. My name is Julian Pando and I am a voter in Sedgwick county. I am writing to encourage the committee to vote no on SB 76.

This bill would require too much self policing from our teachers and faculty. The damages section in particular is of great concern because it opens the door for litigation based on overheard conversations. This bill is wasting the time of any elected officials who are focused on pursuing school reform that improves the resources available to our education system. It restricts the free speech of our educators and the free expression of our students.

Thank you again for listening to my comments. Please vote no on the passage of this bill and continue to protect the free expression of all Kansans.

Melinda Parks
melindaparks85@gmail.com
PRIVATE CITIZEN
2/7/2025

OPPONENT

Chairman Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for giving me time to share my thoughts on SB 76 with you. My name is Melinda Parks and I am a voter in Lenexa, KS. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

This law would be a violation of students' privacy, and put their safety at risk.

- When teachers or staff misgender 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.

This is a politicized attack on our teachers and other educational professionals such as professors, counselors, principals, librarians and more. My daughter has chosen to be an educator in Kansas, which we need. Policies like these will drive our high quality teachers out of the state.

- 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.
- 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 reading my thoughts. I am proud of my Kansas education, and I am proud to have raised a young woman who has become a Kansas educator. Politicians need to stay out of the classroom and let our educators do their jobs.

To: Kansas State Senate
Room 333E Capitol Building
300 SW 10th Avenue
Topeka, KS 66612-1504

Subject: Opposition to SB 76 and Support for Social Transitions in Schools

Dear Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Senate Bill 76, as it threatens the well-being of transgender and non-binary students by restricting their ability to socially transition in schools. With 17 years in education, I have had the privilege of supporting multiple students who identify as trans or non-binary. These students have demonstrated a significant need for support and safety in their social transitioning process. Moreover, I am personally invested in this issue, as I have a trans child who socially transitioned while in high school. This transition was life-changing, leading to dramatic improvements in their mental health, academic success, and social well-being into adulthood.

My child, like many other transgender youth, is now a thriving and contributing member of the Kansas community. They deserve the same respect, dignity, and autonomy as any other citizen—without governmental interference in their personal choices. The ability to exercise agency over one's identity is fundamental to personal development, and no law should stand in the way of a person's right to be themselves in a safe and supportive environment.

Research overwhelmingly supports the positive impact of affirming social transitions:

1. **Mental Health Benefits** – Transgender youth who are allowed to socially transition experience reduced anxiety, depression, and gender dysphoria. Access to affirming spaces significantly lowers the risk of harmful coping mechanisms and improves overall well-being.
2. **Academic Success** – When students feel safe and supported, they are better able to focus on their education. My own child flourished academically after transitioning, demonstrating that an affirming environment can lead to higher engagement and achievement.
3. **Increased Sense of Belonging** – Social transitions help students feel more authentically themselves and accepted by their peers, fostering confidence, resilience, and overall emotional well-being.

4. **Protection Against Suicide and Self-Harm** – Research indicates that affirming environments significantly reduce suicide risk among transgender youth. Policies that create barriers to social transitions contribute to isolation and increased mental health struggles.

5. **Improved Peer Relationships and School Climate** – Schools that respect students' gender identities see decreased bullying, harassment, and discrimination, creating a safer learning environment for all students.

By restricting support for social transitions, SB 76 not only harms individual students but also creates an exclusionary school climate that fosters stigma and marginalization. Rather than enacting legislation that limits support for these students, I urge you to prioritize policies that promote inclusivity, equity, and mental health resources in schools.

Kansas should be a place where all young people—including transgender youth—are respected for who they are and empowered to make personal decisions with their families and without undue government interference. I urge you to stand with Kansas families by opposing SB 76.

Sincerely,

Mena Patrone

Private Citizen

Mary Patterson
quantumgrace@hotmail.com
Private Citizen
2/10/2025

Opponent

Thank you for the opportunity to submit a written testimony.

As a teacher, students often have nicknames or change their names. It is a violation of 1st Amendment rights to punish teachers for calling the students what they want to be called. What part of the Constitution allows for States to call someone a criminal for calling someone a nickname?

Thank you for voting no on SB 76. Thank you.

Opponent Testimony of SB 76
For the Senate Education Committee
February 10, 2025
Jennifer Pearson
Professor of Sociology, Wichita State University

Chair Erickson and members of the Senate Committee on Education, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 76. I am a professor at Wichita State University who conducts research and teaches in the areas of gender, education, and adolescence and the transition to adulthood. More relevant for this bill, I have served as the faculty advisor for our LGBTQ+ student organization for 15 years. **I am writing to urge you to vote against SB76.**

For 15 years, I have witnessed how students thrive when they are seen and valued by those around them. When students are able to show up authentically, when they are affirmed rather than harassed, when they are treated with dignity and respect, they do wonderful things. They are able to excel in their classes. They are able to tap into their talents, creativity, and knowledge. They are able to persist in college and graduate. **If we want a strong, educated workforce in Kansas, we must support ALL of our students.**

I have difficulty wrapping my head around why anyone would care what name and pronoun a student uses. Affirming someone's identity by using the name that feels right to them is so simple. It requires nothing for educators to support their students in this way, and it means everything to our trans and nonbinary students.

As a researcher, I could share many details about scientific consensus around sex and gender. For example, nearly 5% of our youth, including in Kansas, identify as transgender or nonbinary. **This bill endangers the privacy, safety, and wellbeing of nearly 5% of our students.** I could also explain how such actions are based on a misunderstanding of biological sex and gender differences. Research is clear that biological sex is not straightforward and does not always fit neatly into one category or another. Approximately **1-2% of the population is born with variation in sex characteristics**, meaning for example that they are not genetically XX or XY, their reproductive organs developed differently than their genetic makeup would predict, and/or their external genitalia are inconsistent with their internal reproductive organs. In addition, there is a great deal of variation in levels of sex hormones, and some women are born with higher levels of testosterone while some men naturally have lower levels of testosterone. These hormone levels are also not static – they increase and decrease in response to environment and behavior. Moreover, the consensus across research on gender is that while there may be a significant average difference by sex in certain traits, these averages do not reflect the full distribution of traits among girls/women and boys/men, as there is significant variation within each sex category on any given trait. As such, these average differences fail to capture the incredible degree of overlap between males and females on any given trait. **Defining gender as based on the sex someone is assigned at birth is simply inconsistent with what scientific research has shown for decades.**

However, I think the most important argument is simply that **using names and pronouns consistent with our students' identities is necessary for them to be safe, healthy, and alive.** Please oppose this bill. It will do so much harm.

Jamie Pemberton
jamie.i.pemberton@gmail.com
Private Citizen
2/10/2025

OPPONENT

Members of the committee, thank you in advance for taking the time to share my thoughts on SB 76 with you today. My name is Jamie Pemberton, and I am a voter in Manhattan, Kansas and have been a lifelong Kansas resident. I am writing today to urge you to vote no on SB 76.

One reason why SB 76 should be opposed is its clause regarding damages. Simply hearing the use of a name for someone that isn't on that person's birth certificate or by hearing the use of pronouns for someone that don't appear to align with the gender assigned at birth of the person that they are being used for is no reason for someone to be able to sue for damages.

The potential for exploitation of this law to create frivolous lawsuits is very high. One example that comes to mind is a simple error in speech by confusing the pronouns of two students. Consider two students in a classroom among their peers. One is a cisgender boy who uses he/him pronouns and another student is a cisgender girl who uses she/her pronouns. If a teacher is facilitating a discussion in front of the class and accidentally mixes up the students' pronouns in their speech, referring to the girl by he/him pronouns or to the boy student by she/her pronouns, the students of that class could all now have the legal ground to file a lawsuit. This is an error in speech that I regularly make when discussing two people of the opposite gender. When I make this mistake, I quickly correct myself and move on. The fear of legal consequences from a mistake like this is overwhelmingly disproportionate to what the (alleged) transgression actually caused.

This would also unreasonably prohibit the use of nicknames for students that appear to deviate from their assigned name on their birth certificate. This will limit the ability of Kansas youth to express their creativity and relationships with one another without the risk of severe consequences. As I grew up in Kansas, me and my friends had many nicknames for each other that we called each other in sports and that we derived from inside jokes. There is no reason that we should legally restrict these nicknames. This is a violation of the first amendment for Kansas youth, plain and simple.

All of these arguments that I have laid out don't even begin to approach why this bill should be voted down to preserve the dignity and respect of transgender and gender non-conforming youth in Kansas. This bill is authoritarian for no reason other than to prohibit the affirmation of already vulnerable trans youth in Kansas.

In conclusion, I urge you to vote no on the passage of SB 76. Thank you for your consideration and thoughts on this bill, as well as your concern for the wellbeing of all of Kansas's youth.

Alison Poore
alison.poore@gmail.com
PRIVATE CITIZEN
2/10/2025

OPPONENT

I would like to first thank the Chairman and Members of the Committee. I appreciate you taking the time to hear my thought on SB 76. My Name is Alison Poore and I am a voter in Sedgwick County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote no on SB 76.

SB 76 is alarming for several reasons which should concern the Committee and anyone who cares to protect First Amendment rights laid out in the Constitution. When my sister was 4 years old she decided she wanted her name to be Samantha, she hated her name and decided Samantha was the name. My parents started calling her Samantha, it didn't matter that wasn't the name she was given, it was what she wanted. Her happiness depended on it. That stuck for about 3 weeks and then she decided she wanted to go by Meg again. I share this story to reiterate the fact that although she was young but she used her voice to express what she wanted and instead of beating down her spirit and refusing, my parents chose to respect her wishes. SB 76 claims to protect free speech but bans every teacher, principal, para educator, cafeteria worker, librarian, etc. from using a student's preferred name and pronouns while also threatening them with lawsuits if they don't comply. This is harmful for Kansans and for education settings; it violates privacy and allows our government in personal autonomy. Passing SB 76 would be dangerous and irresponsible.

Once again, I want to thank you for hearing my story and point of view as I encourage you to vote no of the passage of SB 76. Thank you.

Opponent Testimony of SB 76
For the Senate Education Committee
February 10, 2025
Israel Quinonez

Opposition to SB 76 – Protecting the Rights of Transgender Students

Dear Senate Education Committee,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to SB 76, which unfairly targets transgender students by restricting their ability to use their preferred names and pronouns. Every student—regardless of gender identity—deserves to learn in an environment that respects their identity and affirms their dignity. Denying transgender students this fundamental right not only isolates them but also creates a hostile learning environment that stifles personal growth and academic success.

Respecting students' preferred names and pronouns is a matter of basic human dignity and a fundamental aspect of fostering a respectful and inclusive learning environment. Schools should be spaces where students learn not just academics, but also empathy, acceptance, and the importance of embracing diversity. Teaching young people to respect and acknowledge the uniqueness of their peers is crucial in shaping a society that values equality and understanding.

Furthermore, for students entering higher education, it is unreasonable to require parental permission to use their preferred name. At this stage, these individuals are legal adults, fully capable of making independent decisions about their identity. To impose such restrictions is to deny them their autonomy and to subject them to unnecessary barriers that do not align with the principles of higher education, where personal growth and self-determination should be encouraged.

Beyond the personal impact on students, this bill contradicts the core values upon which our nation was founded. The pursuit of happiness is a fundamental ideal, and policies that single out and restrict the rights of a marginalized group run counter to this principle. Instead of fostering division and exclusion, legislation should aim to protect the rights and well-being of all individuals, ensuring that every student has the opportunity to thrive without fear of discrimination.

I urge you to oppose SB 76 and stand in support of policies that promote equality, respect, and the well-being of all students. Transgender students deserve the same opportunities as their peers—to learn, grow, and be recognized for who they truly are. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Israel Quinonez

Elizabeth raheb
Elizabethraheb@gmail.com
Private citizen
2/10/2025

OPPONENT

My name is Elizabeth Raheb and I am a voter in your county, I'm writing you today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76

I have had friends in highschool that have struggle with suicidal thoughts and depression due to discrimination due to their preferred gender. Protecting youth in their gender identity is so important to mental and physical health, to ignore these factors is to push a marginalized group further away from support. By pushing this law, you are directly contributing depression of our youth, and will contribute to the rise of suicidal in teenagers and younger children.

Once again thank you for hearing me out, please vote no on passage SB 76

Paris Raite
paris.raite@gmail.com
Private citizen
2/10/2025

OPPONENT

Chairman Erickson and members of the committee thank you for the time to provide opponents testimony to SB76. I am writing to encourage the committee and its members to vote NO on this bill.

This bill is obviously a major first rights amendment. I'm not sure why this bill thinks it's allowed to police the language that teachers and professors use but bills like this is why you squeeze teachers and young professionals out of this state. Imagine coming to college in Kansas and finding out that their colleges don't allow professors to respect students choices in how they are referred to. I'd run for the hills! Kinda like most young people here already do! This bill is beyond ridiculous.

Once again, please vote NO on SB76

Ariana Repp
arianarepp18@gmail.com
Private Citizen
2/6/2025

Opponent

Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me time to share my thoughts on SB76 with you today. My name is Ariana REPP and I am a voter in Douglas County. Thank Al writing to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

As someone who has worked with transgender students in schools in our state of Kansas I can tell you right now that this bill is extremely harmful.

Trans teens that do not have accepting parents at home often find school to be their one safe haven. Having educators and friends who respect their identities and who they are is literally life saving. Trying to pass a bill that would seek to punish educators for respecting a students identity is wrong. It's a horrendous overreach and it violates our first amendment rights.

You're not making schools safer for students and you're quite literally looking to aid parents in the abuse of their own children. Because that's what it is to misgender and dead name your child. It's mental and emotional abuse.

Furthermore, allowing just anyone to report educators even if they're not the student or directly involved with the student is essentially asking people to tattle on each other and erodes the trust of the educators in one another and their students. Trust is essential to a safe and successful learning environment and you will erode that trust.

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

Gary W. Rapp
rappg@me.com
Private Citizen
2/6/2025

Opponent

Chairwoman Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me and other citizens with lived experience on this matter the chance to comment on SB76 with you today. My name is Gary W Rapp and I am a Wichita voter. I have been an educator for over 25 years and am currently the parent of a teenager who attends Andover High School. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB76.

Every Kansas student has the right to be called by their gender-affirming name and pronouns, and schools have a legal obligation to respect each student's gender identity, even before students are able to legally update their names or gender markers.

This law would violate students' privacy and put their safety at risk, as their rights to privacy and safety are closely linked to being referred to by names and pronouns consistent with their gender identity. Respecting students' names and pronouns is necessary to protect transgender and gender-diverse students from bullying and discrimination. When teachers or staff misgender or deadname a student, it opens the door for peers to do the same, creating an environment where the student is more likely to face bullying or harassment. As someone who endured endless name calling as a student; names like fag, fairy, queerbait and homo, I understand the consequences and impacts - I would ask that you take a good long look in the mirror and ask yourselves "have I really listened to those whose lives are most impacted by this bill?"

Moreover, this bill represents a politicized attack on teachers and other educational professionals, such as professors, counselors, principals, librarians, and more. The damages section of this bill is overly broad and allows for litigation based on overhearing conversations. This is a witch hunt, to quote the current president of these not very United States. If you don't listen to us, can you recognize when you are putting our educators, of whom there is a shortage, at further risk?

The bill does not require the person suing for damages to be involved in the conversation, meaning anyone overhearing a conversation could bring litigation. Even if an education professional wanted to follow this law perfectly, it would be nearly impossible to protect themselves from the risk of litigation. There is no effective way to ensure that every school employee and student knows every student's name and sex as listed on their birth certificate, nor should there be. The practical inability to enforce this bill may lead to excessive administrative burdens on local schools and higher education institutions, both in attempting to enforce it and in defending the institutions and their employees against frivolous lawsuits. Please stop this invasion into classrooms and schools across the state and into the lives of students and families you do not know and seemingly don't want to know. This reckless use of

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

If you have read this far, I want to thank you for being committed to hearing from citizens of Kansas, and I encourage you to all vote NO to the passage of SB76. This bill if made law, would be both difficult to consistently enforce, would be a disruption to our educational system and a distraction to all students' education.

Rod L. Richardson
armadillo19910@icloud.com
Private Citizen
2/6/2025

Opponet

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 Rod Richardson and I am a voter in Johnson County, Kansas. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

I've practiced law in Kansas for 51 years, supported, opposed and testified on many bills in your legislature. The first rule of any proposed legislation is this: what harm to the public is so clear and evident and widespread that it justifies this bill? In this case there is no demonstrable harm that supporters have, or can, show that could possibly justify State intervention in such a personal area. The ONLY apparent harm that you suggest would be to personal religious or political convictions. That is not why you or your cohorts were elected. Keep the States nose out of this. For all the objections that I hear from Kansas Republicans about the Federal and State Government overreach this proposed legislation should be the poster child for unnecessary and harmful overreach. Let people be the people they are. Once you cross this line you may as well start against particular religious or political groups, or books or any other line of thought or personal decisions or behavior that violate the personal bubbles of legislators. Exposing teachers to one more level of "criminal" penalty for what is clearly free speech makes a mockery of both the State and Federal Constitutional protection of civil liberty. Please back off on this. It's just more and more evidence that the State and Federal Legislatures run by either party can turn into instruments to advance the personal animus of those elected to serve the greater good. This bill is not for the greater good of Kansas, it's kids or teachers. Don't support this!

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.

Erika Ricketts
erikoula@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 Erika Ricketts and I am a voter in Johnson County, Overland Park KS. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

I oppose this bill and legislators should vote against it. It is harmful to children and puts educators in a difficult position. They all have enough to worry about. I personally know several people, both children and adults, that would be affected by this. Why fill our world with exclusion and hate?

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.

Opposition Testimony for SB 76

For the Senate Education Committee

February 10th, 2025

Steven Ringel

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.

Phoebe Rinkel
phoeberinkel@gmail.com
Private Citizen
2/7/2025

Opponent

Chairman Erickson and Committee Members, thank you for taking the time to consider my concerns regarding SB 76. My name is Phoebe Rinkel and I am a voter from Johnson County.

I hold a MS Degree in Family and Child Development and recently retired following a career working in the field of early intervention and early childhood special education. My 40 year career included working directly with infants and young children and their families as well as providing training and technical assistance to others working in my field across the state of Kansas. While working directly with families over many years, I met several parents who requested a developmental screening because their preschooler's gender identity and gender expression did not fit the gender assigned to them at birth. In each instance, what these children had in common was that they were physically healthy children experiencing no developmental delays, except for their response to the screening question: "Are you a boy or a girl?" They also showed strong preferences for toys and activities usually associated with their gender identity, as opposed to their gender assigned at birth. These parents came to us fearful of how their precious children might be treated when they started kindergarten. I can only imagine how families like these are feeling in Kansas today. No parent should be afraid to send their child to school. This bill would be a violation of a student's privacy and put their safety at risk. It injects politics into classrooms and undermines the licensed professionals in our schools who are trained to educate and support our children. It is a hateful, harmful action that will hurt children and families.

Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns. Please vote no on SB 76.

Dawn Ritchie
dawnnikol@gmail.com
Private Citizen
2/10/2025

OPPONENT

Chairman 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 Dawn and I am a voter in Johnson County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76

The stated purpose of this act is supposedly “a matter of free speech and academic freedom” as it claims that “the selection and use of pronouns in classrooms, on campuses and elsewhere... communicates a message on a matter of public concern and shapes classroom discussion and debate.” This conveniently ignores trans students’ rights, including the right to privacy, self-determination, and their own free speech and expression.

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.

Veronica Robertson
verorobertson@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 Veronica Robertson and I am a voter in Johnson County/Leawood. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76"

Passing this will cause so much harm to our youth. It violates free speech, and places educator in a very difficult position. Educators are leaving their jobs because it is increasing more difficult to co play with restrictive rule.

This is a politicized attack on our teachers and other educational professionals such as professors, councilors, principals, librarians and more.

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.

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. It would cause unnecessary harm to their mental health.

Courts across the country have found that refusing to use someone's gender-affirming name and pronouns can constitute gender-based harassment in violation of the Equal Protection Clause.

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 SB 76
For the Senate Education Committee
2/6/2025

Beth Roselyn (they/she)
PRIVATE CITIZEN
beth.roselyn@gmail.com

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 76. My name is Beth Roselyn and I am a voter in Douglas County. I am writing to you today to encourage the committee to vote no on SB 76.

SB 76 purports to be a bill promoting free speech and academic freedom for school employees but, in reality, this is a bill designed to promote discrimination against gender diverse students in Kansas, which will lead to worsening their educational outcomes, mental health, and safety. I have been teaching in higher education for nearly 20 years and one of the things I have come to learn in that time is that treating students with dignity and respect, accepting them for who they are, and allowing them the time and space to explore themselves in the educational environment is essential for their development as human beings and their educational success. For trans, nonbinary, and gender diverse students, the simple fact of their teachers and classmates calling them by their name (their *real name*, regardless of what their birth certificate says) and the correct pronouns is an essential component of providing a safe learning environment. The fear, anxiety, and alienation misgendering and dead naming cause students is real and harmful. The state does not need to reach into classrooms to dictate what names or pronouns our students use.

This bill would enshrine discrimination into the laws of Kansas, a state that prides itself in promoting freedom, starting with its establishment as a Free State in 1861. Legislating discrimination through government overreach is not consistent with Kansas values. The constant attacks against trans people, particularly trans youth, in the US and Kansas over the last several years have had real and measurable negative impacts on the health and well-being of trans people. A paper published in *Nature Human Behaviour* in 2024 ("State-level anti-transgender laws increase past-year suicide attempts among transgender and non-binary young people in the USA" by Lee et al.) showed that enacting anti-trans legislation increased suicide attempts among trans and nonbinary youth by up to 72%. To be clear, passing legislation like SB 76 leads to significant increases in youth suicide attempts. Read that again: passing legislation like SB 76 leads to significant increases in youth suicide attempts. Living in a state where the people who make laws designed to explicitly discriminate against trans youth leads to depression and despair. Trans kids do not attempt suicide because they are trans but because they live in states in which adults who are charged with passing laws to protect and support the citizens of their states choose instead to make it harder for them to be themselves, demonize them, and provide a permission structure that increases bullying and violence.

In a survey of Kansas voters last year, Perry Udem found that 79% of Kansans felt that state politicians are not in touch with the financial challenges facing the average Kansas family and 70% disagreed with the statement "Most Kansas politicians are looking out for working families in the state and trying to pass policies that will help them" (28% somewhat disagree, 42% strongly disagree; only 4% of voters surveyed strongly agreed). Instead of spending time on legislation that would help Kansas families, like Medicaid expansion, ensuring access to

healthcare in rural communities, investing in childcare, or addressing childhood poverty and hunger, which are all issues Kansas care about, one of the first pieces of legislation this body is considering is focused on harming kids in Kansas and interfering with the ability of teachers, counselors, and others to be supportive, affirming adults in children's lives.

According to 2022 data, 131,430 children in Kansas are food insecure and 90,000 live in poverty. Additionally, 38,000 Kansas children are without health insurance. Estimates suggest there are about 2,100 trans youth between 13 and 17 in Kansas. Why is the Kansas legislature so focused on harming those 2,100 trans kids instead of passing legislation to help the kids and families in Kansas living in poverty, with food insecurity, and without adequate access to healthcare? Maybe it is time to shift your focus to what matters to Kansas families instead of making life harder for kids who just want to be themselves.

As a trans nonbinary educator, I take seriously my position as a role model for trans, nonbinary, and gender diverse students. I want students to see that they can be who they are and find happiness, joy, and success in the world. That is getting harder and harder as bills like this are introduced in Kansas and around the country. I have no idea why the Kansas legislature thinks that being mean to kids who are different—that making being mean the law of the land—is how your valuable time in the service of the people of Kansas should be spent. For the proponents of this bill, I have no idea how to get you to see people like me as human beings, worthy of the same dignity and rights you are.

Thank you for your time. Please oppose this harmful legislation. Vote no on SB 76.

Sincerely,
Beth Roselyn
Pronouns: they/she

Emily Rost
ejr3620@yahoo.com
Private Citizen
2/10/2025

Opponent

Chairman Erickson and Members of the Committee, I appreciate you giving me the opportunity to share my opinion on SB 76 with you. My name is Emily Rost and I am a Douglas County voter. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

This bill is a gross misuse of time and energy. Schools are meant to be safe spaces for children to learn. Teachers are meant to respect students privacy and rights while providing them the tools they need to be successful in the world. Our teachers are already incredibly overworked and underpaid. And now you expect them to know the legal birth name of every student in the entire school? Make this make sense. When did the priorities switch from preparing and educating children for a successful life to policing children's names? Why does the state of Kansas care so much about how children refer to themselves? This bill is incredibly pointless and unenforceable. Vote No on SB 76 so the children of Kansas can focus on learning the tools for a successful life as a Kansan and the teachers can focus on providing those tools.

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

Jordan Rowe
rowejordanm@gmail.com
Private citizen
2/10/2025

OPPONENT

Hello Chairman Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for providing me time to share my thoughts on SB 76 with you today. My name is Jordan Rowe and I am a voter in Overland Park. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

In my role as a healthcare professional working with individuals who identify as transgender, I see in clinic every day the hope and joy that receiving affirming care can make in their lives. In the last weeks, the current political climate and this bill in particular have prompted numerous conversations with patients and their families who are afraid of what passing this bill could mean for them and for their community. They fear not only about the impact it could have on their medical care, but also the negative downstream effects of discrimination and hate it may incite within the state. Many have even questioned whether remaining as residents in Kansas is a good idea for their families. I have cried with them as they express their fears and the way bills such as this makes them feel ostracized and dehumanized. Despite all major medical organizations, including the American Academy of Pediatrics, denouncing bills such as this one, stating that they would cause significantly more harm than good to the youth they supposedly protect, states continue to push policy that limits the rights of the gender diverse community. I urge you to vote no on this bill and instead uphold the veto providing protection for the transgender community.

Again, thank you 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.

TAISIA SARAZOV

skeeterscorner@gmail.com

Social Work Intern in the Kansas City Kansas Public School District

2/10/2025

OPPONENT

Members of the committee, thank you for hearing my testimony. My name is Taia Sarazov and I am a voter in Johnson County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO ON SB 76.

I oppose this bill for multiple reasons. As someone who works in a school, I know firsthand that this will only have negative consequences should it pass. First, it will be infringing on a student's right to privacy as well as compounding the existing pressure that contributes to our current youth mental health crisis. Additionally, it would be very difficult to enforce. This bill does nothing but potentially damaging the relationships between teachers, students, and parents. This bill does nothing to protect kids or improve their educations.

Thank you again for hearing my testimony. I once again urge you to vote no on the passage of SB 76.

Opponent Testimony of SB 76

For the Senate Education Committee

February 10, 2025

Rowan Scheuring

Private Citizen

Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to express my thoughts regarding SB 76. My name is Rowan Scheuring and I am a voter in Douglas County. I am writing today to urge the committee to vote no on SB 76.

SB 76 would be profoundly damaging to our students and education workers. This bill purports to protect the free speech of the employees of school districts and postsecondary educational institutions; however, it would be virtually impossible for such employees to avoid the risk of litigation under this bill should it become law. It would be, at best, an infringement on the privacy of students and a huge administrative burden to ensure that every employee is aware of the name and sex that appears on each student's birth certificate. This bill is a needless attack on marginalized students and hinders the ability of educators to create safe and respectful learning environments. Students in our state deserve to go to school knowing that they will be respected and protected from discrimination. This bill would serve only to add to the hardship of students and already overworked school employees.

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

Opponent Testimony of SB 76

For the Senate Education Committee

February 7, 2025

Megan Schrader

Private Citizen

Dear Committee,

I am the proud mother of a transgender, Maxwell DiGiovanni. While Max's journey in life did not start off with him as a male, I couldn't be prouder of Max in finding his true-self as he identifies as a male. Max is a college student, over the age of 18 years old. While we consider the age of 18 years old to be a legal adult, it would be against their constitutional rights as an adult to not have the opportunity to be respected and referred as the name and gender identification that they desire and feel most comfortable with. I do not support SB 76 and greatly encourage the committee to give respect to transgenders. I am outraged that this Senate Bill is even being considered.

Megan Schrader

Proud Mother of Maxwell DiGiovanni

Shaw
Sp5moreano@gmail.com
Private citizen
2/6/2025

Opponent

Chairman Erickson and Members of the Committee.

Thank you so much for hearing thoughts on SB 76 with you today. My name is Stacy Shaw and I am a voter in Fairway, Kansas . I encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76

We need to return to a standard of respect which includes respect for all children and protection of our teachers.

Thank you for removing the hate and voting no on the passage of SB 76

Sandra M. Siebert
gstarfire7@yahoo.com
Private Citizen
5/2/1957

Opponent

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 Sandra Siebert and I am a voter in Perry, Jefferson County. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

This is a matter in which the legislature has no business. These children deserve the right to self-determination and sympathetic teachers should be allowed to respect that right and call them by their preferred names and pronouns. Allowing children to socially transition at school gives them a sense of worth and prevents self-harm behaviors and suicide. This bill shows no compassion toward these students who present no threat to anyone.

Thank you for considering my opinion. Vote no on SB 76

CHLOE SIMPSON
freelywrittengirl@hotmail.com
PRIVATE CITIZEN
2/7/2025

OPPONENT

Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony today. My name is Chloe Simpson, I am a voter in Overland Park. I am writing today to urge you to vote NO on SB 76.

I am writing to you both as an individual with trans and genderqueer friends and family, as well as a licensed professional counselor who often works with trans and genderqueer youth. My first priority is to protect the safety and wellbeing of both my loved ones and my clients. Based on my personal and professional experience, I strongly believe that SB 76 would directly harm and disenfranchise the trans and genderqueer youth in our state by legally barring school employees from respecting the identity and expression of a population of young people who are already most vulnerable to mental illness, suicide, bullying, and sexual assault. To be clear, it is not just trans youth who are opposed to this bill, so are all of their loved ones, teachers, counselors, and other supports in the community. Even if you personally question the legitimacy of trans and genderqueer identities, I hope that you listen to what Kansans are saying: we do not want restrictions on the freedom and wellbeing of trans and genderqueer youth or the families and professionals who support them.

Thank you for hearing my testimony. 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 10, 2025
Tanya Singh

Senator Erickson and Members of the Senate Education Committee, my name is Tanya Singh and I oppose SB 76. Thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on SB 76.

My name is Tanya Singh, and I am currently a second-year student at the University of Kansas School of Law. While I myself am cisgender, the University of Kansas has a vibrant trans community. I have several friends and colleagues who are a part of this community, and am consistently impressed by their academic excellence and advocacy for other Kansans.

Above all, I believe that it is important that every person be afforded equal dignity and respect. It is one of the most fundamental propositions of this great nation, that no person is lesser than another for who they are. I am asking the Senate Education Committee to oppose SB 76 because it codifies and enables harassment towards transgender students in the educational setting.

It is a scary time to be transgender right now. I can understand that much from conversations I have had with others. There are feelings of deep-seated unease and insecurity relating to the criminalization and marginalization of transgender people in many state legislatures with anti-trans legislature. SB 76 is no exception.

This bill states that students will not be subject to disciplinary action for declining to address an individual by a name or pronoun that is inconsistent with the individual's birth certificate or biological sex. However, the National Education Association (NEA), a public school union partly responsible for the founding of the United States Department of Education, opposes this very proposition. The NEA states that addressing individuals by the wrong name or pronouns is harmful. Patently so.

In the context of transgender students, passing SB 76 forces schoolteachers and administrators to turn a blind eye when other students address a transgender student by their deadname or misgender them by using the wrong pronouns, as students may not be subject to disciplinary action for these actions. I imagine section (d) of this bill applies even when students use the wrong name or pronouns maliciously when addressing another student.

This bill would result in the marginalization of transgender students; the NEA has made such a statement¹ on using the wrong name or pronouns in educational settings. Transgender students affected by this bill would distrust our education system and feel alienated. I understand that this bill applies to transgender students who are under the age of 18. However, schools are important places for students to express themselves in.

¹ Álvarez, Brenda. "Why Pronouns Matter." NEA, National Education Association, www.nea.org/nea-today/all-news-articles/why-pronouns-matter#:~:text=Addressing%20someone%20by%20the%20wrong,is%20not%20seen%20as%20important. Accessed 7 Feb. 2025.

Further, it is not a difficult proposition to wrap one's head around, using names and pronouns that are different from the ones on a person's birth certificate. Cisgender people use nicknames in educational settings consistently, even if they are not a derivation of the name on their birth certificate in the slightest. Educators tend to respect this preference as well. Thus, it should not be a radical proposition for transgender students to be addressed by the name and pronouns they identify with.

Addressing transgender students by the name and pronouns they identify with is integral to their well-being. It results in better mental health and social outcomes, such as a reduced depression and suicide risk. Not only is this a conclusion approached by the Association of Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT), but in various pediatric health journals which the ABCT references.² This is also a potentially adverse outcome which is described by the CDC.³

I come from a scientific background. I received my undergraduate degree in biology from the University of Kansas, and have always had an interest in medicine, healthcare, and population health. I would not be remiss in stating that the promotion of simple gender-affirming measures, such as using the name and pronouns which a student identifies with, are preventative. These simple actions are preventative in that they are associated with the avoidance of negative health outcomes. This is a well-studied phenomenon.⁴

Even if you are not swayed that using the correct name and pronouns for transgender students is a basic action demonstrating respect and dignity for the student as a person, I ask that you examine these actions through the lens of population health. That these actions avoid negative mental health outcomes and avoid social isolation, feelings of alienation, and marginalization. That, as legislators, you should avoid harming your constituents- avoid harming Kansans. Especially those which come from already-marginalized groups.

Given the gravity of the harms at stake here, passing SB 76 under a flimsy free speech rationale is grossly inappropriate. Condoning the acts of deadnaming and misgendering as expressing differing viewpoints on a person's gender or identity is disgusting. Our Constitutional right to freedom of speech was hard-fought. It is still hard-fought, to this very day. Our First Amendment rights were intended to prevent government censorship, which our nation experienced during the tyrannical rule of the British Empire.

There is no plausible equivalence between addressing a person as they wish to be addressed and the systematic censorship which the British Empire imposed on the American colonies. While my primary opposition to SB 76 is on the previously mentioned grounds, I cannot deny that I am apprehensive about my state's legislature using a free speech rationale to pass such a bill. I am worried about the usage of one

² Narine, Kevin, and Melinda Wald. "Why Pronouns Are Important ." ABCT, Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies , 26 May 2021, www.abct.org/featured-articles/why-pronouns-are-important/#:~:text=What%20are%20the%20benefits%20of,reduced%20depression%20and%20suicide%20risk.

³ Perez, Suzanne. "Federal Report: Transgender Students Face Greater Risk of Bullying, Isolation and Suicide." Kansas Public Radio, Kansas Public Radio, 23 Oct. 2024, kansaspublicradio.org/2024-10-23/federal-report-transgender-students-face-greater-risk-of-bullying-isolation-and-suicide.

⁴ Pollitt, Amanda M., et al. "Predictors and mental health benefits of chosen name use among transgender youth." *Youth & Society*, vol. 53, no. 2, 16 June 2019, pp. 320–341, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118x19855898>.

of the nation's noblest protections in such a manner that perverts it beyond recognition. Thus, I must oppose SB 76 on principle as well, in addition to the undue harm it is likely to cause to transgender students in Kansas.

Sincerely,
Tanya Singh

Hauna Slaughter
haunaleigh@gmail.com
Private Citizen
2/7/2025

OPPONENT

Chairman and Members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me to share my thoughts on SB 76 with you and for taking the time to read this message. My name is Hauna and I am a vote in Shawnee. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

This bill is a clear violation of students' privacy and an attack on supportive teachers who are trying their best to make their classrooms safe spaces for every student. As someone who has worked with kids of all ages both professionally and as a volunteer, I can confidently say that kids learn better when they feel safe and trust the adults around them. This bill would harm that valuable trust between educator and student. We have a teacher crisis; educators are leaving the profession all of the time. Kansas should not be passing unnecessary bills that add undue stress to educators and school staff while infringing on their First Amendment rights. We should be focusing on the bigger issues facing our schools such as gun violence, hunger, and lack of funding for special education services. Calling someone by their preferred name and pronouns harms no one. But this bill opens up the door to unnecessary discrimination and the potential for bullying. I encourage you to ask yourself, who does this bill **actually** protect? Or is it just simply designed to target and harm a very small, marginalized community who is asking for basic human dignity and respect?

This bill is unwanted by the majority of Kansans, is a complete waste of valuable taxpayer money and time, has zero scientific or educational merit, and sends a clear message to Kansas educators and children that it is NOT ok to be who you want to be in this state. I urge you to oppose that sentiment and this bill and show Kansans that we are accepting of ALL types of people and appreciate the great value each and every individual adds to our state.

Thank you for your time and for carefully considering the testimony of your constituents. Once again, I ask you all to vote no on the passage of SB 76. Thank you so much.

Jonathan Smith
Jonathansmith0502@gmail.com
Private citizen
2/7/2025

Opponent

Thank you for receiving my testimony today. I am writing in opposition to SB 76.

This bill unnecessarily forces the inhumane treatment of a minority class of people. Transgender individuals take up one of the smallest percentages of identified genders.

This law would mandate a frankly disgusting method of communicating with individuals identifying as Transgender.

I feel like there are enough real problems in Kansas for you to focus on. Please stop wasting time on these unwanted laws.

Thank you for your time. Please oppose SB 76, so we can all get to work on some actually meaningful legislation.

TRENNA SODERLING
trenna.soderling@gmail.com
PRIVATE CITIZEN
2/10/2025

OPPONENT

Chairman Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for the time you've provided for me to share my thoughts on SB 76 today. Although this poses extreme concerns for the future of Free Speech, I'm grateful that I'm presently afforded the opportunity to share my thoughts. My name is Trenna Soderling and I'm a voter in Lawrence, KS. I'm writing today to urge you to vote NO on SB 76.

I think my introduction makes it clear how I feel about this bill. Besides it being unfair and unkind to educators and children, it is a severe violation of human rights and our right to Free Speech. While the federal government works to dismantle our rights one by one, I had hope that Kansas politicians would stand up for these basic rights that textbooks, political anthems, and the cultural zeitgeist of America has touted for nearly 250 years. You have the opportunity now to show the Kansas electorate that you're on the side of history that cares about continuing to uphold the values of freedom and right to expression.

Besides this bill being dangerous to American freedoms at large, its vague and unclear nature makes it entirely ridiculous to uphold, or even think of upholding. How could parameters be accurately defined? Outside of trans students, would female Samantha's who align with their given-at-birth gender identity no longer be able to go by the nickname of "Sam", simply because it sounds like a boy name? Would teachers be open to litigation and lawsuits for a slip of the tongue when referring to students if they accidentally use the wrong pronouns at the end of a long day dealing with America's youth?

And then we come to trans kids. Why would it matter to you, the government, if a kid who was born as a boy felt that they're truly a girl? Why is trying on names harmful? What is so scary about referring to a kid as "they/them"? Trying out different forms of expressions is paramount to the safety and wellbeing of children, and when kids are given the safety to find their true identities, it creates a safer and happier environment for everyone. If you can't handle children expressing themselves and teachers working to support them then well, you really must be against Free Speech.

If you want to create unsafe school environments where children feel that they're being watched at every move, this would be a bill that would help that. I think it would create unsafe learning environments and encourage unhealthy relationships with teachers and schools, where kids feel censored, watched, and uncomfortable, no matter if they're using their given name or not. I think it would lead to less productive learning environments. If you are trying to create a dumber Kansas, where people can't focus in school because the government has its hands around the throats of teachers and children, then this would be the perfect bill. If you pass this bill, it would

prove to your voters that YOU are motivated not by care, but by a desire for silence, control, and lack of safe educational spaces.

I'd like to thank you again for listening to my stories and thoughts on this bill. As our elected officials, I hold you to the high standard of caring for our political freedoms. Vote no on SB 76 so we as your electorate know that you are not trying to create a state where our constitutional freedoms are stripped further. Thank you.

SYD SORENSEN
sydsorensen96@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 Syd and I am a voter in Sedgwick County, Wichita. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

I strongly believe that SB 76 should be opposed due to too many detrimental circumstances that could transpire if this bill is passed. As an educator in the classroom setting pronouns are something that exists in modern day society beyond the concept of gender and sexuality, so to ban pronouns in the classroom would be the equivalent of deconstructing and essential part of the English language. To also add into that statement- the damage clause on this is absolutely horrendous and is a BLATANT infringement on the 1st amendment freedom of speech. This leaves a completely open playing field for an educator to say "they" referring to a group of people and being accused of using they/them pronouns on a student. At that point in time we are repeating a major witch hunt- again. This witch hunt can also apply to the 35 year veteran teacher that 1 student does not like. Students also would be the largest victim in this. Preferred pro-noun use has been statistically proven to improve the mental health of trans and non-binary students. This also goes further to improve the graduation rate of that said district. Pronouns do not hurt- they only help. Also the concept of "outing" students to parents before they are ready is highly dangerous to those students whose parents are not as open to their children- and this opens up children to abuse and negligence at the hands of their caretaker. Pronoun use in the classroom will continue to be an essential and a students right to use as they freely decide too. If students are not comfortable with who they are they also reserve the right to freely explore who they are on their own accord and we as educators are obligated to grant the students that level of human decency and respect just like we expect it from them.

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.

Brianna Southworth
briasouthworth@gmail.com
Private Citizen
2/10/2025

Opponent

Dear Chairman Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for considering the thoughts and statements of myself and other citizens in regards to SB 76. My name is Bri Southworth and I am a voter in Sedgwick County. Today I am writing to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

Despite this bill claiming to protect the freedom of speech, this bill is inherently against the First Amendment. The constitution protects every citizens right to freedom of expression, which includes things like the name they go by and the pronouns they prefer to be called. Banning the use of preferred names and pronouns for minor students is creating an environment of distrust, fear, and repression during pivotal times in a young persons development. For many years I disliked my own name and I have gone by various nicknames, especially during my teenage years where I was a more insecure and anxious individual, dealing with many changes in my life. Having the ability to even slightly control how I presented myself and how I was referred to allowed me to find a space for myself and comfort in a stressful time period. Why would we not want to offer our children and teenager's the ability to find comfort in themselves during a time of such rapid change and emotional conflict? How can it be constitutional for the government to decide what nickname I be called by my teachers and peers in our own personal conversations? Thousands of people choose to go by names that are not what is written on their birth certificate as they develop their own identity going forward. Respecting someone's chosen name and pronouns does not cause any harm. To vote for this bill is to not only be transphobic and negatively affect a very small portion of the population which only wishes to be true to themselves, but to also restrict the rights of thousands of Americans.

Thank you again for hearing my thoughts on this bill, and I encourage you all to vote NO on the passage of SB 76. Thank you for your time.

Gina Spade

Written-only OPPOSITION testimony

SB 76

Members of the Kansas Education Committee:

I hope this testimony finds you well. My name is Gina Spade. I was born in Pratt, grew up in Wichita, and am now a resident of Douglas County. I am writing in OPPOSITION to Senate Bill 76.

When I was a freshman in high school, I was made fun of for my name by turning it into a female body part. I desperately wanted to use a different name. This bill would keep kids like me from using a different name in school without their parent's written permission. This just shows how silly this bill actually is.

I guess the bill's purpose is to prohibit any discipline of a teacher who can't find it in their heart to treat a student with respect by using the name and/or pronouns the students wishes to use. (Also, note that sentence refers to a singular person – "a teacher" – but uses a plural pronoun – "their" – which is common grammar usage when we don't know the gender of the person.) But the bill itself shows this isn't true, as presumably the teacher would use the desired name/pronouns if a student's parents sign written permission. So I guess the teachers' "First Amendment right" to be disrespectful of the student won't apply if the student's parents weigh in. Does this bill also apply to a Katherine who wants to go by Katie, but the teacher insists upon calling the student Katherine? Why does the teacher's "right" outweigh that of the student? It is the student's name at issue here.

But what's even worse is the prohibition on using a student's preferred name and/or pronouns when the teacher is totally fine with doing so. Isn't that a violation of that teacher's free speech? What about the student's right to be called by the name they prefer? The Supreme Court has found that students have First Amendment rights that they do not shed when they enter the schoolhouse doors.

Logistically, this seems to create a bunch of paperwork that has nothing to do with the education of a child. What if one parent agrees but the other doesn't? What if the parents are divorced or one parent has abandoned the family? Why are we making schools jump through these hoops. Is this really the most pressing business for this committee and the Kansas Senate?

Finally, this bill is morally wrong. Kids deserve respect. If being called a different name than is listed on their birth certificate gives them confidence and improves their well-being, it is wrong of the state government to prohibit that. Kids often try out new things when they are teens. I fail to see how trying on a different name or using different pronouns harms anyone at all, much less would serve as a cause of action for our already overloaded court system. The only people being harmed here are kids.

Please oppose this bill.

Thank you for your time.

Jamie Sperry
jamielsperry@gmail.com
Private citizen
2/6/2025

Opponent

Chairman Erickson and members of the committee, thank you for giving Kansas constituents including myself time to share their thoughts on SB 76. My name is Jamie Sperry and I am a voter in Overland Park. I am writing today to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

I am the parent of a non-binary primary school aged child who attends public school within Johnson County. My child has directly benefited from nearly five years of proudly and publicly living as exactly who they are. They have been in therapy throughout these five years, working with gender identity specialists to confirm and affirm their gender identity. Social transition, by way of pronoun usage, is my child's sole gender affirming care. I have seen them blossom, coming home with excitement when recounting stories of their peers affirming them and vocally supporting their use of they/them pronouns in school. Every person deserves the ability to be accepted and live exactly as they show up in this world. Children are no exception.

Again, thank you for your time and consideration in hearing my family's concerns for our child. I encourage you to vote NO on the passage of SB 76.

Casey Spinder
s.cassandra4224@yahoo.com
private citizen
2/10/2025

OPPONENT

Members of the Committee, thank you so much for giving me the opportunity to share my thoughts on SB 76. My name is Casey Spinder and I am a voter in Wichita. I am writing to encourage the committee to vote NO on SB 76.

I oppose SB 76 for many reasons:

1. The damages clause. It allows people, not even involved in an interaction, to sue a person for using names and pronouns that do not match the birth certificate. This can lead to bogged-down courts. I am sure many of you on the committee have met someone named William who goes by Bill? Abigail who goes by Abby? There are a million examples of names used who do not match birth certificates.
2. Goes against free speech. This act supposedly upholds one's free speech. However, it does quite the opposite. By requiring using a certain pronoun or name, you are doing the opposite. Not to mention, the student's right of free speech to refer to themselves as they which, the right to self-determination, and the right to privacy are violated as well.
3. Violates Title IX and Equal Protection Clause of the U.S. Constitution: Under these, schools have a legal obligation to respect all gender identities, including using the student's chosen pronouns. Courts across the country have already found that refusing to use a student's chosen pronouns can constitute gender-based harassment in violation of these.
4. Violates right to privacy. This would force schools to "out" students, potentially leading to harassment, bullying, or even violence. This also creates an opportunity for anyone outside of the gender norm to be accused of being "trans". A boy who likes singing. A girl who likes sports. A girl whose arms are "too hairy". A boy whose voice hasn't dropped yet.
5. It's poorly written. Even if an educator intended to follow this bill to the letter, it would be impossible to protect themselves from being sued. The educator simply does not have the knowledge of every student's birth name and sex, nor should they.

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