



KANSAS NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION / 715 SW 10TH AVENUE / TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612-1686

Timothy R. Graham
Director of Government Relations & Legislative Affairs
Oral Testimony – **Oppose**
Senate Bill 381
Senate Committee on Education
February 11, 2026

Chairperson Erickson, members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to SB 381.

Kansas NEA is a member-driven organization representing nearly 22,000 educators across the state of Kansas. Our members are organized into more than 265 local associations and work in schools and communities across nearly all 105 Kansas counties, serving students in urban, suburban, and rural districts alike.

The positions we advocate for are proposed, debated, and adopted by hundreds of educators selected by their peers to attend our annual Representative Assembly, reflecting the collective voice of education professionals of all political parties, beliefs, and backgrounds who are united by a commitment to Kansas public schools and the students they serve.

KNEA has several resolutions addressing academic freedom, professional discretion, and curriculum development and local control.

Resolution B-3-1, as reflected in the Kansas NEA Book of Resolutions, states:

Kansas NEA believes that academic freedom is essential to the teaching profession. Academic and literary freedom include the rights of teachers and learners to explore and discuss divergent points of view. Contentious issues should be a part of the instructional program when, in the judgment of the professional staff, the issues are appropriate to the curriculum and to the maturity level of the student.

KNEA further believes that professional freedom is essential to the education profession. Professional freedom includes the educator's right to evaluate, criticize, and/or advocate a personal point of view concerning the policies and programs of the schools. Furthermore, educators must be free to depart from mandated scripted learning programs and pacing charts without prejudice or punishment.

Resolution B-2-7, as reflected in the Kansas NEA Book of Resolutions, states:

Kansas NEA believes educators must be involved in the development of curriculum and the adoption of instructional materials.

These resolutions reflect the professional judgment of Kansas educators and provide the framework for our opposition to SB 381.

Statutory Mandates Undermine Academic Freedom and Professional Discretion

SB 381 replaces educator judgment with statutory mandates that prescribe how complex political and economic ideologies must be taught across all grade levels. Our academic freedom resolution is clear that educators—not legislators—are best positioned to determine when and how contentious issues are introduced based on curriculum alignment and student maturity.

Curriculum Decisions Belong in Educational, Not Political, Processes

Kansas NEA’s resolutions affirm that educators must be involved in curriculum development and instructional material decisions. SB 381 bypasses that process by directing content through statute, limiting flexibility and undermining the role of educators, districts, and the State Board in shaping effective instruction.

High-Stakes Graduation Requirements Raise Additional Concerns

Conditioning graduation on passage of a single civics examination introduces a high-stakes requirement that is disconnected from classroom instruction and educator-led assessment practices.

In closing, Kansas NEA’s opposition to SB 381 is grounded in our long-standing resolutions on academic freedom and educator-led curriculum development. This bill replaces professional judgment with statutory mandates and adds a high-stakes graduation requirement that is disconnected from classroom instruction.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify in opposition to SB 381.