



*End discrimination based on
sexual orientation and
gender identity*

Opposition testimony of HB 2311
Senate Public Health and Welfare
March 12th, 2025
Taryn Jones
Policy Director, Equality Kansas

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee, my name is Taryn, and I am here testifying in opposition to HB 2311 as the Policy Director of Equality Kansas.

My current job is Policy Director of Equality Kansas, but my training is in social work. One of my first jobs out of college was working family preservation. I worked with children who were still with their families. We worked with these families to prevent children from going into foster care. Unfortunately, that was not always successful and while it was needed, we should remember that taking children away from their families isn't something we do lightly.

Being involved in the child welfare system whether that be family preservation or foster care is traumatic, especially for the children. Taking children away from their families is incredibly difficult on children and when we are deciding where to place children or who to adopt them out to all factors should be considered.

This bill states that a person's religious or moral beliefs cannot be a deciding factor in being a licensed foster parent or part of a decision in placement, but in the same breath talks about the best interest of the child. So, which is it? You cannot place an LGBTQ child with a foster parent who has moral objections to the community and then have it also be in the best interest of the child. What

happens when DCF decides not to place an LGBTQ child in a foster home where the family does not believe in affirming the child's sexual orientation or gender identity? The bill states that the child's best interest can still be considered, but that you cannot deny a foster parent because of their religious or moral beliefs. What happens when those things conflict and DCF is forced to choose the child's best interest.

HB 2311 is a poorly written bill that contradicts itself and opens the state up to lawsuits when they are considering the child's best interest in placement (as they should). Placing an LGBTQ child with unaffirming parents to avoid lawsuits is state sanctioned child neglect. I am in opposition to HB 2311 and ask you to vote no on this harmful bill.