

Opposition Testimony for HB 2311

For the Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare

March 12, 2025

Mo Horowitz

Chair Gossage and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony on HB 2311.

My mother worked in foster care for over a decade. I have a close friend who was placed in more than one foster home as a child. Their experience has helped me understand that foster care is inherently traumatizing, even when everyone is lovely, accepting, and respectful.

While I am grateful for the recent steps our state has taken to improve our foster care system, I fear that HB 2311 would put that progress at risk by failing to protect vulnerable young people. The phrase “sincerely held religious or moral beliefs regarding sexual orientation or gender identity” is a broad umbrella that can include practices that are extremely harmful to any child or teenager perceived as not being straight or cisgender by their foster parents. Layering trauma upon trauma increases the likelihood these young people will self-harm or run away, which in turn would place them in danger of further harm.

I also have concerns about the precedent this bill would set. For example, if a young person's Christianity is important to who they are, and a potential foster family says that they will never support or accept that, does HB 2311 create a precedent upon which the adults can successfully sue DCF if the child is not placed with them? Where is the line drawn?

I think we all agree that young people deserve homes where they are loved and valued. LGBTQ+ youth in our state are already at an unacceptably high risk of suicide. HB 2311 would create additional unnecessary dangers for Kansan children. Please put the children of our state before politics.

Thank you for your consideration.