

LOUD LIGHT CIVIC ACTION

Melissa Stiehler
Loud Light Civic Action
Written Opponent Testimony of HB 2793
For the House Health and Human Services Committee

February 15, 2023

Chair Landwehr and members of the Committee,

Thank you so much for the opportunity to provide testimony today. My name is Melissa Stiehler, and I serve as Advocacy Director of Loud Light Civic Action, a Kansas based, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that supports and builds the civic engagement and leadership of young people in our state. With respect to the health and wellbeing of these young people, Loud Light Civic Action opposes HB 2793.

Concern: Restricting Critical Healthcare

While parental involvement in healthcare decisions is the most preferable option, mandating it will inevitably lead to minors not accessing critical healthcare if they are required to tell their parents or guardians. While we are specifically worried about restricting access to potentially life saving treatments such as treatment for addiction, STD testing and treatment, PReP, contraception, and healthcare for minors who are pregnant, the broadness of this bill could have far reaching and life altering impacts due to blanket coverage of healthcare with limited exceptions. We urge the committee to expand the vetting process beyond this hearing in order to have a full understanding of the impact and potential unintended consequences before moving forward on legislation like HB 2793.

Concern: Is this Constitutionally Compliant?

Carey v. Population Services International explicitly affirmed the constitutional right to privacy for minors to obtain contraceptives. It does not appear as though there is an exception to contraception as listed in subsection (c).

Concern: Blanket Restrictions on Right to Privacy

When it comes to blanket restrictions on the rights of our citizens, such as the right to medical privacy, it is the legislature's responsibility to craft these laws in as narrow a frame as possible and with a specific problem it aims to solve. We do not believe that this law meets that responsibly, as we have seen no verifiable evidence that minors are accessing healthcare in Kansas without the consent of their parents or guardians in any sort of widespread or problematic fashion. We urge the legislature to craft laws based on proven facts, rather than unsubstantiated rumors or online conspiracy theories.

For these reasons, Loud Light Civic Action strongly urges members of this committee to oppose HB 2793. Thank you all for your time and I hope you take my testimony into consideration.