



Oral Opponent Testimony before the Senate Committee on Education

To  
SB 255

Wednesday, March 22, 2023

1:30 P.M. Room 144-S

By Jim Karleskint, United School Administrators of Kansas

Sen. Baumgardner, Members of the Senate Committee on Education:

USA-KS stands opposed to this bill.

On the surface this bill seems like an easy fix, but we believe it's the unintended consequence that makes it not only problematic for schools, but potentially dangerous for students. This bill attempts to find a long-term solution to a single incident that has already been resolved and handled by a local school district.

We have developed into a society that believes in handling situations through the press, courts, or legislation, rather than managing the situation at the lowest level. As schools continue to understand and support transgender students, it is important to develop and have local policies to accept the unique attributes of each child, but not an all-encompassing law that ties the hands of local districts from making the best decision for all students involved.

People can deny the fact that schools have students who identify as LGBTQ, and that is their choice 100 percent, but it shouldn't stop the fact that their differences exist. Schools and society have a responsibility to treat all individuals with the same respect and rights as any other student in their care. Oftentimes, as adults, we lack the ability to understand the difference in individuals, whether it's race, religion, sexual preferences, gender identification, or even political beliefs, but that should never give any individual the right to intentionally exclude someone with a different background or values the same rights and opportunities as those we may closely align.

We encourage the members of the committee to set aside any personal biases or beliefs and trust that our local districts can manage the changing world they live and breathe. Attempting to create a singular mold in which all students must live is not appropriate. Providing the local districts and parents the autonomy to make decisions that best fit their situation should be considered best practice.