

Opponent Testimony of HB2238  
For the Senate Education Committee  
March 6, 2023  
Keaton Vaughn  
Kansas Resident

Chair Baumgardner and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent written testimony on House Bill 2238.

I am writing to you today providing testimony in opposition of HB2238. My name is Keaton Vaughn and I am a homeowner in Overland Park, Kansas. I identify as non-binary and transgender and my pronouns are they/them/theirs. I grew up in Overland Park and attended school in the Blue Valley school district. I went to Heartland Elementary, Harmony Middle, and Blue Valley Northwest. I now hold a Master of Business Administration from Pittsburg State University.

I played sports throughout elementary and middle school and I know how impactful they can be on a young person's life. Sports help us connect with our peers, stay physically fit, and work together to achieve a common goal. If someone had told me that I was barred from participating in sports with the peer group that aligns with my gender identity I would have been devastated. HB2238 is overtly discriminatory and exclusionary and if passed it will harm Kansas.

I would like to address some upsetting statistics. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among young people ages 10 to 24 (Trevor Project). On top of that, one in three transgender youth has reported attempting suicide (Trevor Project). Many transgender young people experience rejection, bullying, and harassment (Human Rights Campaign). We should be passing inclusive legislation to protect marginalized groups such as the transgender community, not attacking some of the most vulnerable Kansans. There is a correlation between passing discriminatory legislation and an increase in suicide and violence rates. If you pass HB2238 you will be conveying to our transgender children and neighbors that their lives are not valued and that they do not belong here in Kansas.

For the business-minded, I want to emphasize that this discriminatory legislation tells transgender people and their allies that they are not welcome in Kansas and that they should spend their hard-earned paychecks elsewhere. Additionally, this legislation will deter businesses that want

to foster a welcoming and inclusive environment from operating in Kansas. 83% of Fortune 500 companies prohibit discrimination based on gender identity and expression (Human Rights Campaign). If you pass this legislation, businesses will avoid moving to Kansas and citizens will spend their money somewhere else.

I strongly urge the committee to reject HB2238. Thank you.