

March 18,2023
Proponent SB 315
Oral Testimony - In Person

Dear Chairwomen Gossage and Committee Members:

I am here to testify in strong support of SB 315.

I am grateful for the bi-partisan effort in the fall of 2021 during the Special Session and passage of HB 2001. After being initially terminated, this law saved my job! But mistakenly, we left our children behind! There are schools in our state that are not accepting religious exemption requests. While we affirmed in 2021, that my religious beliefs cannot be scrutinized, we didn't extend that same protection down to my children. This needs to be corrected and SB 315 can do that.

There is no reason why SB 315 should not get the same bi-partisan support we got with HB 2001 as it all only extends the same language down to our children. With the CDC now adding the Covid shot to the scheduled, we have no guarantee that KDHE won't add it to the list of required vaccinations for school as they generally follow the CDC.

You may have noticed by two boys with me at the hearing last Thursday. I had planned on them being here with me today, but I wore them out Thursday with 2 hearings and a climb to the top of the Capitol. I wanted you to see that stand I before you today solely for them in support of this bill!

They had to watch me in the fall of 2021 go through the most difficult decision of my life. Was I going to continue a career of 21 years in healthcare or was I going to stay true to my faith and trust in God and allow him to help me find a new path. That was the scariest and darkest time of my life. They watched me under deep stress work frantically to jump through hoops, spend hours perfecting a document defining my faith to have a complete stranger in HR judge and affirm my belief. They watched me get terminated and all the sadness and uncertainty that came along with it.

As a mother, it is my responsibility to protect them and hopefully work to make their lives easier than mine. That is why I am here today and working overtime to see this bill succeed. I never want them to have to choose between their faith and a school, or job, like I had to do. I want them to be respected for who they are and live in a state with complete religious freedom.

To my fellow republicans, I ask that you abide by the KSGOP Party Platform.

"OUR HEALTHCARE DECISIONS should be made by us and our doctors."

"We affirm the rights guaranteed by the Bill of Rights as originally intended by the founding fathers including the **rights to practice religion freely.**"

"Parents bear the final responsibility before God in rearing of their children and have the right to raise their children consistent with their religious and moral values. Parents must be free to train and discipline their children in love and direct their education and health care according to their beliefs and values without government intrusion."

Although the words above are from the Republican platform, I deeply believe we can come around these words in a bi-partisen way, as these words truly define what it means to be an American. **With that, your only option is to vote YES on SB 315.**

Sincerely,
Lauren Shiffman
Lenexa, KS

(Kansas GOP, 2022;<https://kansas.gop/assets/uploads/2022/04/KSGOP-2022-Platform-Adopted-March-12-2022.pdf>)