



City of Lawrence KANSAS

CITY COMMISSION

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February 14, 2012

Hon. Lance Kinzer, Chair
House Judiciary Committee
Statehouse
Topeka, KS 66603

Dear Chairperson Kinzer and House Judiciary Committee Members:

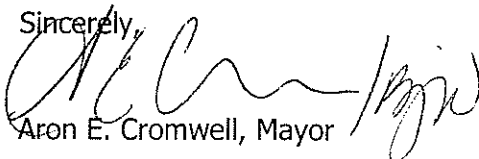
I am writing on behalf of the Lawrence City Commission. Thank you for allowing us to comment on HB 2260. We urge you to not pass HB 2260 because it is unnecessary legislation and it interferes with local governmental units' ability to enact laws important to our constituents.

The United States Constitution, the federal and state civil rights laws and the Kansas Constitution provide adequate protections for Kansans in the exercise of their religion. The City of Lawrence, and many other communities in Kansas, have enacted laws that closely mirror state and federal civil rights laws to ensure discrimination on the basis of religion does not occur. HB 2260 is not necessary.

The bill interferes with a local governing body's ability to enact laws important to our citizens, and impinges on cities' constitutional home rule authority. The bill's definition of "compelling government interest" excludes local laws prohibiting discrimination in employment, public accommodations, and housing which differ from the Kansas Act Against Discrimination, K.S.A. 44-1001 et seq. Lawrence's law prohibiting discrimination is broader and more inclusive than the Kansas Act Against Discrimination. Our laws were enacted after much public comment and thoughtful deliberation by our elected officials. Self-governance by locally elected officials must be preserved in order to ensure that local issues and problems are handled at the level of government closest to the citizens they represent.

We urge you to not pass HB 2660. Please feel free to contact City Manager David Corliss if you need additional information.

Sincerely,



Aron E. Cromwell, Mayor

c: City Commission
David L. Corliss, City Manager

