

SB 479
House Committee on Federal and State Affairs
Written Testimony
March 14, 2022
Proponent

Chairman Barker and Members of the Committee:

The Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence (KCSDV) is a statewide non-profit organization whose membership is the twenty-five sexual and domestic violence programs serving victims across Kansas. KCSDV provides information, training, and analysis on issues impacting victims of domestic and sexual violence, their families, and their communities. Our members, the local advocacy programs, are committed to providing quality services to victims of sexual assault and domestic violence, empowering victims to live independently without the ongoing fear of violence, and helping victims secure the resources necessary for a safe and healthy future.

Domestic and sexual violence are the result of sexism and systemic misogyny. Both are rooted in a desire by perpetrators to subjugate their victims and exert power and control over them. These are the forces of inequality that KCSDV and staff of our member programs across the state work tirelessly and diligently to combat. The suffragists of the early 20th century were fighting against the very same forces and laid the groundwork for the efforts that are still ongoing today. Without their diligence and arduous efforts women, not just in Kansas but across the country, would still be powerless to stand up to the forces that work so hard to minimize their inherent value. Suffragists fought for the recognition that women are fundamentally as important as men in this society and deserve to be treated with the same decency and respect. This is a fight that activists around the globe are still fighting to this day.

During the legislative session, I spend a good deal of time walking the halls of the Kansas Capitol. During these periods, it is almost impossible to miss the ubiquitous presence of school children. These children come from all over the state to learn about government and, hopefully, be inspired to grow up to be civilly engaged citizens. Dedicating space in the Capitol to honoring the decades of work that culminated in the right to vote for white women¹ in Kansas and America sends a clear message to the children who visit and citizens around the state that Kansas values its women and supports our ability to have a say in the governance of our state.

For the reasons stated above, KCSDV supports the passage of SB 479.

Respectfully,

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¹ Women of color were not guaranteed the right to vote until the Voting Rights Act of 1965.