

Testimony before the

**House K-12 Committee on K-12 Education Budget**

on

**HB 2662**

**Parents' Bill of Rights and Transparency Act**

by

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Madam Chair and members of the committee,

I stand in opposition of this bill.

I'm currently a senior at Chaparral High School, and I plan to be a teacher. I'm sharing my story today in hopes to influence the committee's decision on how this bill impacts my future as a potential teacher. My love and passion for teaching led to this career goal and this bill challenges the very reason why I want to teach, which is to use creativity and teachable moments to empower students.

During the fall semester, I had the opportunity to intern for the first 2 hours of the day at our local elementary school. In the course of this internship, teachers were able to adapt their lessons on the spot in order to include my gifts and skills as a future educator to benefit the students in the classroom. Specific parts of this bill would limit the ability of the teachers in adapting the lessons to make the best use of my experience (page 2, line 35-40).

With different teaching approaches in mind, I want to use guided instruction and just-in-time learning as classroom tools as well as direct instruction to educate students. Without clarity in HB 2662, implies that it limits my ability to even ask students the question, "Why was the Civil Rights Act of 1964 needed in our country?" as a topic for guided discussion in the classroom.

The specific references to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 on page 2, lines 11-20 read as though facts relating to history that did violate this act could be misinterpreted from a parent as violating the bill. This bill reads as though a parent's political opinion weighs more than that of historical facts taught in the classroom by an educator. It is illegal under the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to discriminate based on race, color, national origin, religion, and sex. ... However, political views aren't covered by these laws.

A teacher's job is to educate their students with facts and nothing else. It is the students themselves that go deeper into the subject, with conversations or discussions within the classroom that lead to controversial topics. Teachers provide opportunities for discussion, but cannot control the opinions their students construct through these educational discussions.

As an example, a teacher could present facts relating to slavery or the Holocaust, which in turn a class discussion ensues. This discussion could very well challenge student perspectives and ideas. This section reads as though only the facts would be presented without a discussion, yet best practice and research identify student conversations as a beneficial learning strategy ([elaborative interrogation](#)). The goal of student learning of concepts relating to the civil rights act of 1964 helps to keep history from repeating itself. With this bill, these discussions in a classroom are putting that teacher at risk simply for allowing students to dig deeper into their learning.

Through my experience, students that understand the inequities of others are more likely to be empathetic. High levels of empathy lead to stronger relationships and the ability to work through conflict. By limiting the ability to address inequities identified by the civil rights act of 1964, our society becomes more judgmental and unlikely to work through and solve societal challenges. In order to solve our society's problems, we must define them first, and guaranteeing civil rights for all continues to be a societal challenge.

I also want to communicate that I'm not in opposition to parent awareness and involvement in a student's learning, however, I do support this relationship being between the classroom teacher and the student's families. With my educational degree and background, I plan to work with parents for clarity and open lines of communication. However, with that being stated, legislation mandating how this relationship needs to look adds to decreased flexibility, which ends up limiting the strength of the learning experience for a student.

Through the Kansas Open Records Act, parents already have access to the information stated in this bill. It appears that the only difference is the financial burden to procure the documents is now solely on the school. Adding a parent portal allows not only parents but students the ability to access tests and answers, which seems to enable the potential to cheat. This removes the option for summative assessments because the information is published to the student body.

By limiting the ability to learn about those inequities, our society becomes less and less empathetic. As a student, I appreciate my educational experiences in the classroom with educators and peers. I've had the opportunity to learn from amazing teachers, with each one of them working to help students become better every day. In my educational experience, teachers have used the guided discussion teaching approach to encourage students to use open dialogue. My classmates and I have been given a safe place to hold discussions even if we disagree, it gives us the opportunity to learn from each other. It is a sad reality that racial insensitivity and harm continue to thrive in our society and in our schools. In part, this is due to the lack of educational opportunities that allow for creative discussions and critical examination of the issues, which could lead to empathy and reduced harm.

In conclusion, the bill limits educational opportunities and ties the hands of an educator to provide a learning environment that is engaging and individualized. Educators at the current time work to develop critical thinking skills and personalized learning to meet the students' individual needs. I feel this bill diminishes the value of being a teacher, which adds to the teacher shortage through the additional limitation to the art and creativity of teaching and learning. As a future educator and a current

student in a Kansas school, I urge you to reconsider passing HB 2662 and trust our teachers to navigate these difficult waters.

Thank you for your time.

#### References

Elaborative interrogation. (2/11/2022). Retrieved from

[https://www.visiblelearningmetax.com/influences/view/elaborative\\_interrogation](https://www.visiblelearningmetax.com/influences/view/elaborative_interrogation)