



The Episcopal Diocese of Kansas

The Right Reverend Cathleen Chittenden Bascom
Tenth Bishop of Kansas

February 22, 2021

Re: Written Testimony in Opposition to SB 208

As Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Kansas, I am writing to oppose Senate Bill No. 208. I quote my colleague the Rev. Gay Clark Jennings, who said, "As Christians, we bear a particular responsibility to speak out, because attempts to deny LGBTQ people their dignity and humanity as children of God are too often made in the name of God. This way of fear is not the way of Jesus Christ, who teaches us to cast out fear."

The Episcopal Church opposes all legislation that restricts public restroom, locker room and shower access for transgender and gender non-conforming people. Research shows that such bills disproportionately impact and contribute to a pattern of violence against transgender women and non-binary identified people. (General Convention Resolution 2018-C022)

The Episcopal Church's support for legal protections for LGBTQ people stems from its understanding of Christian social teaching grounded in the teaching of Jesus. Our presiding Bishop Michael Curry describes it best when he said, "The General Convention has taken these stands based on Christian social teaching grounded in the teaching of Jesus and his way of love which compels Christians, in the language of the Covenant of Holy Baptism, to 'seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself' and to 'strive for justice and peace among all people and respect the dignity of every human being'."

I believe this bill discriminates against transgender young people. The process demanded in the bill sounds traumatic for all children and youth but particularly any young people who are in the process of understanding their identity.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Cathleen Bascom".

The Right Reverend Cathleen Chittenden Bascom
Tenth Bishop, The Episcopal Diocese of Kansas
835 SW Polk Street
Topeka, KS 66612
785-235-9255
cbascom@episcopal-ks.org