

Michael Rebne/Safe and Welcoming Wyandotte/Safe and Welcoming Roeland Park
Bill Number: HB2717 – Opposed
Written Testimony

My name is Michael Rebne and I am a teacher in Wyandotte County and a Roeland Park city council member. My home zip code is 66205. Today I would like to share with you why HB 2717 is unnecessary government overreach and should be eliminated

In Roeland Park we spent nearly 2 years in research, discussion, and negotiation for how best to implement an ordinance that would provide better inclusion for all of our residents. In Wyandotte county over 5 years was spent on the advocacy process to clearly determine what is best for the community. In that time, the local communities spoke clearly and consistently that putting in safeguards around police collaboration with ICE is what we want.

As a teacher, I know that students and their families are afraid to get further engaged in their communities, and this includes searching for jobs that are in the most need. HB 2717 will make the economy worse and harm business owners.

My students are afraid to apply for college and scholarships or participate in extracurricular opportunities out of fear that they or their family will be scrutinized by immigration authorities, regardless of their citizenship status. This is bad for our society and economy if we are forcing motivated and skilled students out of the pursuit of their dreams.

Our communities have also clearly decided that we do not want our limited resources spent on needless immigration enforcement by local police. To make a mandate like HB 2717 does is the worst example of what some call Big Government—expensive and unnecessary.

This bill makes women less safe. It is well understood that victims in abusive relationships, who are generally women, will not seek protection from their abuser from local authorities if they believe it would result in the deportation of a family member. By making ordinances like Safe and Welcoming illegal, women are put at further risk of harm.

Finally, this bill uses racism—clearly targeting a community of color—in order to undermine rights that people of all racial and ethnic backgrounds deserve, including the right to vote without unnecessary hardship. There is no such thing as widespread voter fraud and the implication that municipal IDs would cause this is a red herring being used to further divide our communities.

HB 2717 is a bad bill that will cause wasteful government spending, damage the economy, make us less safe, and harm the lives of people, especially children. I urge you to abandon it.
Thank you