



TESTIMONY
Concerned Women for America of Kansas
HB 2203

Chairman Kinzer and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

Concerned Women for America of Kansas is in favor of HB 2203. This is a bill that upholds the free exercise of religion. One of CWA's core issues of concern is religious freedom for all; the right to practice or observe religious beliefs without suffering economic loss and relinquishment of civil rights.

Much has been said in modern times about "freedom"; we have all watched as former dictatorships and repressive regimes have been overthrown and so-called democratic reforms instituted. We have also watched those democratic reforms be used as license to do whatever one chooses. Our Constitution is a unique document that has put into place a "balance of power" that keeps licentiousness and power-grabbing at bay while affording each citizen the rights for which our founders and other Americans sacrificed.

However, in recent years, it has become evident that some have been determined to undermine the inalienable rights prescribed by the Declaration of Independence. The First Amendment prohibits Congress from making any laws to establish a state religion or to prohibit the free exercise of religion. Certain sincerely-held religious beliefs about those inalienable rights prescribed in the Declaration such as life and liberty should not be abridged or punished by an "evolving sense of morality" or by a governmental power-play.

Today we are witnessing the government increasingly trumping religious freedom. This practice ranges from military chaplains being told what they can and cannot say to the troops in religious ceremonies and counseling to the government telling religious institutions what healthcare options to offer. We have seen children expelled from school for expressing their religious beliefs, and we are witnessing a federal takeover of what medical personnel and institutions must provide in the way of healthcare.

Religious institutions and individuals must be free to practice their sincerely-held beliefs without interference from the government. Kansans and Americans should be able to exercise their religious freedom without fearing economic and political reprisals.

We urge you to pass this bill.

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HOUSE JUDICIARY

DATE: 2/18/17

ATTACHMENT 11