

**Testimony in Opposition of House Bill 2653**  
**To the Committee on Federal and State Affairs**  
**February 15, 2024**  
**By Delaney Cay Jones**  
**In Opposition**

To Representative and Chairman Will Carpenter and members of the committee,

My name is Delaney Jones. I am a graduate student, educator, and reproductive justice activist from El Dorado Kansas. I appreciate the opportunity to submit testimony on the proposed bill and write to you today in opposition of House Bill No. 2653.

First and foremost, bills such as HB2653 seek to codify harmful personhood language under the guise of financial pregnancy assistance. The language used throughout this bill is indicative of the goal of establishing fetal “personhood,” a long-running and far-reaching strategy commonly used in legislation to advance anti-abortion agendas. In addition, language with underlying strategies such as the language present in HB2653 is not only misleading to constituents, but the bill’s language presents a very tangible threat to the rights and protections of pregnant people. Bills such as this one raise significant concerns about the surveillance and invasion of privacy of pregnant people, especially those who experience a pregnancy loss.

Further, this bill illustrates an inappropriate means of assessing and upholding the obligations of child support. A positive pregnancy test does not in itself indicate the birth of a child/children. This bill also fails to provide any guidelines or structure for pregnancies ending in stillbirth, miscarriage, or abortion. It also fails to specify the items included and excluded from “pregnancy-related expenses” as well as the paperwork obligations, timeline, and refund potential when addressing the financial obligations of the proposed child support payments.

To say this legislation is disingenuous would be an understatement. By broadening the definition of personhood to include fertilized cells, embryos, and/or fetuses is not only evident of extreme bias but illustrates the underlying intention of the legislature to utilize such language in anti-abortion bills moving forward. Utilizing backdoor style policies such as HB2653 poses the potential for wide-spread and severe consequences for pregnant people in Kansas. It also elucidates the effort towards potential criminalization of any behavior deemed to threaten a pregnancy.

If elected leaders wish to protect pregnant people, their families, and their communities, there already exists a variety of support networks, policies, and organizations that could utilize such support. Pregnant people in Kansas deserve to retain their rights and protections rather than be dehumanized, targeted, and harmed by the duplicitous language of HB2653.

In closing, it is in support of the reproductive rights and freedoms of all Kansans that I urge you to vote in opposition of House Bill No. 2653. Thank you for the opportunity for a submission of my testimony regarding this policy and your consideration thereof.

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