

Liz Hamor, CEO of Center of Daring

Oral and Written Opposition Testimony regarding SB 180

“Establishing the women's bill of rights to provide a meaning of biological sex for purposes of statutory construction.”

House Health and Human Services Committee

March 6, 2023 - 1:30pm

Dear House Health and Human Services Committee Members,

I'm a suburban soccer mom, a wife, a business owner, a leadership consultant and coach, a Christian, and a longtime LGBTQ advocate. You may know me from my time doing advocacy with either GLSEN Kansas or Equality Kansas. While I don't represent either of those organizations currently, I will continue to do LGBTQ advocacy as long as there is a need.

Since more anti-trans bills have been introduced this year than anytime in the last decade, there's definitely a need for my work.

I'm here to ask you to oppose SB 180. Upon the first reading, it was clear to me that whoever wrote the bill has little understanding of human biology, or at least less than I received through high school biology 2 and college biology in the late 90s. The binary language of the bill dictating that there are only two sexes – male and female – is completely, biologically inaccurate and erases the existence of intersex people like my friend Leslie. (Please see his original written testimony in opposition of this bill on the Senate side as well.)

Think about it for a moment: Nothing about humans is binary. There are way more than two options for eye color, hair color, skin color, size, shape, personality, sense of humor, etc. Every characteristic that makes us diverse as humans has an infinite number of expressions. Why then, would one of the most important things about us be binary? The answer is, it's not. “Biological sex” is not binary, and it's incredibly harmful and dangerous to support legislation that says it is.

Just as my friend, Leslie, explains in his written testimony, “biological sex” exists on a spectrum. In fact, intersex people not only exist, but make up a portion of the population equal to that of redheads.

Do you know a redhead? Yeah, of course you do. You know someone who is intersex too. You just might not KNOW that you know.

The thing is, SB 180 doesn't make any sense unless the authors of the bill erase 1.7% of the population. So, they'll have you believe that sex is binary with ONLY two narrowly defined options: male or female. They likely do that because if they concede that sex is a spectrum, and that biology is impressively complicated and fantastically diverse, then that leads to also validating that gender is a spectrum, which validates trans identities.

But nah, it's easier for them to deny science – deny that there is diversity in the trillion cell divisions that make up our complex human bodies – than to validate the humanity and existence of people they don't understand and have been taught to fear. It's easier for them to erase intersex people and dehumanize trans people than to admit they might be wrong, or may have been lied to, about the world and its people.

Bills like SB 180 are founded on animus. This hostility toward transgender and intersex people from the state legislature perpetuates and ignites hostility toward transgender and intersex people in their homes, their communities, their churches, their places of employment, etc.

Bills like SB 180 make life exponentially harder for hundreds of Kansans who I know and love, and I know I'm not alone when I say we expect better of our legislators. I'd certainly rather have all of our current legislators lead with curiosity, compassion, and understanding for trans and intersex people than what's happening right now. However, if a faction of legislators are going to go all in on this unprecedented attack on trans Kansans, I'm hopeful that the anti-trans hostility coming out of the Capitol is going to wake up and engage the sleeping giant of the currently non-civically engaged moderate middle. In my experience, they believe legislators who support these bills to be incompatible with their Kansas values, and I believe that once awakened, they will ultimately choose to fight for Love to win.

Please vote NO on SB 180. Please don't erase intersex people and please don't support bills that dehumanize trans people.

With hope,
Liz Hamor, she/her
Center of Daring
316-285-9231
liz.hamor@centerofdaring.com