

Written Testimony in Opposition to HB2238 by Rev. Caroline Dean
Senate Committee on Education, Sen. Molly Baumgardner, Chair

Mar 6, 2023

Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in opposition to HB2238. My name is Rev. Caroline Dean. I grew up in the Baptist tradition and I am now serving as an ordained pastor in the United Church of Christ in Kansas. I would like to offer a testimony that helps you understand why I stand against HB 2238.

My best friend has a transgender child. I have mentored several students and partnered with several colleagues who are in the transgender community. I have seen their grace and dignity in the face of many challenges. Transgender students deserve the chance to participate in school activities and school sports in a way that is gender-affirming. There is no evidence that transgender girls' participation in sports is harmful for anyone. However, there is strong evidence that settings that do not support transgender youth are very harmful and even life-threatening.

According to the Trevor Project (see link below) there is data that consistently finds that LGBTQ youth have lower rates of attempting suicide when they have access to LGBTQ-affirming spaces. This bill would codify Kansas schools as non-affirming spaces for transgender students and would therefore harm our Kansas youth and their families.

I have recently visited with two transgender people who moved to Kansas from Texas because of hostile legislation that has passed there. If this bill passes We will be saying to our families of transgender students that they are not welcome in Kansas. We do not want to drive out these beautiful families who love living in this state and who contribute their gifts to our communities.

believe that we are all made in the image of God and that all of our students deserve the chance to thrive in their particular school setting.

Blessings for this day,

Rev. Caroline Dean
Kansas Oklahoma Conference of the United Church of Christ
& Kansas Interfaith Action
Lawrence, KS

<https://www.thetrevorproject.org/resources/article/facts-about-lgbtq-youth-suicide/>