

State of Kansas
House of Representatives

State Capitol
300 SW 10th Street
Topeka, Kansas 66612
(785) 296-7693



1545 E. 119th St.
Mulvane, Kansas 67110
(316) 749-8303
jesse.burris@house.ks.gov

Jesse Burris
Representative, 82nd District

February 13, 2018

The Honorable Richard Proehl
Chair, House Committee on Transportation
Kansas State Capitol
300 SW 10th St., Room 581-W
Topeka, KS 66612

RE: Testimony In Support of House Bill 2678

Chairman Proehl and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of House Bill (H.B.) 2678.¹ For the following reasons I support H.B. 2678, and I believe that the state of Kansas should provide to Kansans “a choose life license plate”:²

- (1) The state of Kansas is a state of the United States.³
- (2) The Declaration of Independence is often labeled the “founding document” of the United States.⁴
- (3) Of the fundamental rights of all mankind enumerated by the Declaration of Independence, “life” is listed first, thereby implying that, under the Declaration of Independence, the right to life is preeminent over the other fundamental rights.⁵
- (4) As Kansas is a state of the United States, and as the Declaration of Independence is the “founding document” of the United States, the values expressed in and by the Declaration of Independence are those of Kansas.
- (5) Further, this state’s foundational document, the Constitution of the State of Kansas, declares that “[a]ll men are possessed of equal and inalienable natural rights, among which are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”⁶
- (6) That the Kansas Constitution lists “life” first among and before the other fundamental rights indicates that, under the Kansas Constitution, the right to life is preeminent over the other fundamental rights.⁷

(7) That within the Declaration of Independence and the Kansas Constitution the right to life is listed first among the fundamental rights indicates that the right to life is of the utmost importance and centrality to the United States and the state of Kansas.

(8) Further, and more importantly, the Kansas Constitution declares that “the people of Kansas” are “grateful to Almighty God for our civil and religious privileges.”⁸

(9) Almighty God created all things, including human beings, who He created in His image.⁹

(10) Almighty God has instructed human beings to value their own lives and the lives of others.¹⁰

(11) It is thus appropriate for the state of Kansas to provide to Kansans license plates that affirm the value of life and the preeminence of the right to life.

Therefore, for the reasons set forth above, I respectfully urge the committee to recommend H.B. 2678 favorably for passage.

Respectfully,

Jesse Burris
Representative, Kansas House District 82

¹ (Kan. 2018), available at http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2017_18/measures/documents/hb2678_00_0000.pdf.

² *Id.* at page 1, lines 10-11.

³ An Act for the Admission of Kansas into the Union, Pub. L. No. 36-20, ch. XXV, 12 Stat. 126, 126-28 (1861), in 12 The Statutes at Large, Treaties, and Proclamations of the United States of America 126-28 (George P. Sanger ed., 1863).

⁴ See, e.g., Declaring Independence: The Origin and Influence of America's Founding Document (Christian Y. Dupont & Peter S. Onuf eds., 2008).

⁵ See Thursday, July 4, 1776, reprinted in 5 Journals of the Continental Congress 1774-1789 at 509, 510 (Worthington C. Ford ed., GPO 1906) [hereinafter “5 JCC”] (reproducing “The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen United States of America”) (“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these, are *Life*, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.”) (emphasis added).

⁶ Kan. Const., Bill of Rights, § 1.

⁷ See *id.*

⁸ *Id.* at Preamble.

⁹ Genesis 1:1, 26-27; Matthew 19:4.

¹⁰ See, e.g., Genesis 4:10-12; Exodus 20:13; Psalm 139:13-15; Matthew 5:21-23; John 3:16, 11:17-44.