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From: Dr. Joy Koesten
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To: Federal and State Affairs
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Topic: Written Testimony in Opposition to HCR 5019

Honorable committee members. As a former member of the Kansas House of Representatives, I understand the importance of these committee hearings and I thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in **opposition to HCR 5003**. For the record, I'd like my remarks to be recorded in context of the crisis we face today.

As of today, over 252,000 Kansans have contracted COVID; over 3,355 Kansans have died of this virus. Small businesses are failing, and unemployment is at an all-time high, and on top of that our country is facing an historic Constitutional crisis. Yet your first order of business in this legislative session isn't to ensure Kansans are getting the vaccine, helping our hospitals sustain the onslaught of illness, or helping our citizens come together as one nation. Your first order of business is to strip the Constitutional rights of autonomy and self-determination half of our population. **Keep in mind that many in the Republican caucus refuse to wear a mask to curb the spread of this deadly virus because of their belief it infringes on their liberties.** The hypocrisy is rich.

In 2018, the Kansas Supreme Court ruled that the Kansas Constitution affords all Kansans the Constitutional right to self-determination and autonomy. These rights include the rights for women to make decisions about her body, including the decision as to whether she will continue her pregnancy and that the State may only infringe upon her rights unless the State has a compelling interest and has narrowly tailored its actions to that interest.

Women face a myriad of situations that will cause them to seek a safe and legal abortion. In fact, one in four of us will do so over our lifetime. And the majority of women who seek an abortion already have children and understand all too well the consequences of their gut-wrenching decision to terminate their pregnancy. Women don't live their lives in the false dichotomy of pro-life or pro-choice. They live their lives in the challenging grey area, where answers aren't always so easy. Their **decision to seek a safe and legal abortion should be made in consultation with their doctor, their family, and their faith leader. Not the government.**

I urge you to vote against this bill to ensure that all Kansans are afforded our Constitutional right to self-determination and autonomy.

Respectfully submitted - Joy Koesten