

**Testimony of Rabbi Rebecca Reice, Associate Rabbi  
Congregation Beth Torah, Overland Park, KS  
Opposing House Bill 2199  
House Education Committee  
February 17, 2015**

Members of the House Committee considering HB2199,

I am writing this testimony concerning House Bill 2199, which would establish a state-wide policy requiring parents to opt-in for their children to receive education regarding human sexuality in our public schools.

I am a Kansas tax payer, a Rabbi and a professional educator with a Masters of Arts degree in Jewish Education. In the Jewish tradition, the human body – both male and female – is believed to be shaped by God and created in God’s image (Gen. 1:26-27). There is no shame to be found in the human body nor its functions (e.g., excretory, sexual, etc.). The Jewish tradition teaches the holiness of human sexuality. Public schools are our partner where our children need to learn the facts of their bodies and biological systems. Parents who would rather choose a different source of this information are already free by statute to exclude their children from such public education. This proposed bills does not help these parents. This change is harmful for children, who may be excluded from this knowledge inadvertently. This education is a key point of public partnership with religious tradition. I, as a Rabbi, teach about holiness. Public school educators must be my partners to teach our children about their physical bodies.

I urge you to ensure that all children in Kansas receive public school education about their bodies and human sexuality, unless parents sign consent against such education for their own child. This is our current state practice. Do not change it. I urge you to vote no on HB2199.

Respectfully,

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