

Senate Education Committee  
March 13, 2023  
RE: Proponent Written Testimony for SB 255

Madam Chairwoman Baumgardner and Senate Education Committee,

Thank you for being willing to hear us regarding this important issue of safety for our public school students. I strongly support SB 255 and also urge your support because what a Eudora Public School student endured should never be permitted to occur in the state of Kansas ever again.

During Spring Break last year, a female student finally got to go on her trip of a lifetime. She spent two years working summers, nights, and weekends between her athletics and academics to earn the huge sum of money for this trip. She, along with some of her classmates, her high school teacher, and his wife set off on a trip to Costa Rica and Panama. When they arrived 1,000+ miles from home, she was alarmed and dismayed when she discovered that she had been assigned to sleep in a bed with a biological male. (One female student had previously been assigned to bed-share with him, but had expressed discomfort with the arrangement, and so the teacher had re-assigned her and stuck the female subject of this story into his room.) She went to her teacher/sponsor's wife and expressed concern about this room arrangement, and the sponsor told her to deal with it and go back to her room. She was told she was required to sleep in-- and shower in-- that assigned room. A minor student without a parental advocate was DISREGARDED when she raised concerns about sharing a bed with a biological male.

A person is vulnerable when they're sleeping and showering. A student in the care of a teacher should be protected. Are we really a state that believes the feelings of a transgendered student trumps a female student's feelings of safety in vulnerable environments? If a student has to sneak out of her room at midnight to stay in her friend's room on the floor where she feels safe enough to sleep, are we really doing students a service? Are our views on rule-compliance so short-sighted that we are ok with jeopardizing a student's safety? A biological male who has all of the parts to rape a female should not be bed-sharing on a school trip. A female should not share a hotel room with a boy and be forced to change clothes in the same space, or be exposed to a biological male changing—which could inevitably happen when there are 4 students sharing a hotel room with one bathroom.

Some have said that the trip was not a "school" trip. The trip was available to public school students of Eudora Public High School only, not Christian school, private school, or homeschooled students. The trip was advertised in the hallways of the Eudora Public High School. The teacher/sponsor used his email address issued by the EPS system to coordinate. The fundraisers were advertised and held at EHS. The school board authorized the international travel. This was a school trip.

Sadly, the Eudora Superintendent has NEVER spoken to the student about this issue on the phone or in person. He never offered to reimburse her hard-earned money. He never apologized. He never held the teacher or his wife accountable. When taxpayers requested to speak to the BOE about this, the Superintendent funneled the concerned citizens to a private phone call or meeting with him. The BOE had no idea that there were citizens wanting to address them because the Superintendent said, “for the sake of the student’s privacy,” it couldn’t be addressed—even though her name has never been published and wouldn’t have been uttered in a public forum. THIS SHOULD NOT BE. Her future shouldn’t be destroyed because she felt unsafe in a hotel room in a foreign country on a school trip—and many of us have seen how hateful opposers can be when we stand for what’s right.

Last year, I wrote one of your colleagues about this issue. She didn’t believe me, and said that “This doesn’t even happen at the college level.” I assure you, this did indeed happen to a Kansas high school student, and the student will always ache when she reflects back to her senior trip of a lifetime sabotaged by an activist schoolteacher.

Please protect our public school students who are heterosexual. Don’t disregard this student’s experience (and more that will surely come if we leave this loophole open!). Let’s be proactive NOW instead of waiting Hold the teacher/sponsors accountable for choosing activism over safety and regard for this female student’s feelings and safety. Make it law that biological XX females will only share hotel rooms with biological XX females on school travel.

“A lie doesn’t become truth, wrong doesn’t become right, and evil doesn’t become good, just because it’s accepted by a majority.”—Booker T. Washington

Gratefully,

Melissa Campbell  
Senate District 9