

Stephanie Johannes, she/they
Mathematics Instructor, Gender & Sexuality Alliance Sponsor
Oral/Written Testimony – Opponent
House Committee on Health and Human Services
House Bill 2071
January 28, 2025

Members of the Committee:

My name is Stephanie Johannes and for the past nine years, I've been a public high school math educator and club sponsor in Salina. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to House Bill 2071.

I oppose this bill because it takes away the students' and parents' ability to make choices for themselves. Through this bill, families are being told what can or cannot happen in their lives; a part of their story is being dictated for them. It is my belief that we need to honor parents' rights to make their own decisions for their children and allow them to write the story that makes the most sense for them.

I also believe that this bill will complicate my ability to educate students. In my experience, when students are unable to bring their full authentic selves to school, they are less likely to feel safe enough to interact purposefully or be relaxed and open to learning new content. The result is that their education takes a backseat to the basic need of feeling emotionally and physically safe.

I recognize the concerns that have brought this bill forward, but my experience stands in contrast to the need for a bill such as this. In my nine years, I have had the privilege of teaching numerous transgender and gender non-conforming individuals who have felt supported, engaged, and safe in my classroom. I have observed shy, timid freshmen come into their own stories, pave their way, and become leaders in our school. I have watched seniors help mentor freshmen as they discern who they are, what they want, and how to live that out authentically. And I have had the honor of walking alongside families as they support their children and work hard to make the best choices for their them.

Much like you and I, students and their families want the opportunity to decide their present and their future. I ask that you please allow all students and their families the opportunity to do so; to write their own stories without interference.

Thank you again for your time.

Stephanie Johannes
Salina, KS