

Oral/Written Opponent Testimony of SB-76

For the Senate Education Committee

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Chair Erickson and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide opponent testimony against Senate Bill 76.

My name is Cory Teubner. Senate Bill 76 strikes my professional colleagues with fear. As a career teacher in an esteemed Kansas' community college, I can assert with high confidence that this law would damage our work. It conjures liabilities in our very classrooms, arbitrary new risks rooted in the student-teacher relationships that define the core of our effectiveness and responsibility. Simply put, we might be sued for treating students with the respect on which their learning depends.

Thus, this law chills our ability to speak freely in daily interpersonal communications with students. Worse, it forces us to actively harm those students. We would have to "out" students' private information to peers, for example, or make a distracting, public issue of something that in actual practice rarely requires overt attention. To squelch speech in this way will certainly cause its prominence to surge at the expense, of course, of our routine content and exercises. Perhaps more perniciously, the law erodes the everyday, reliable safety of classrooms and campuses – the only spaces many students report they may escape crippling anxieties and even physical threats they sometimes face at home or work.

In this bill, the State seeks to interfere in the personal lives of students and families and into the everyday work of my profession. The State apparently wants to tell me what words I can say in my classroom. Moreover, it maliciously seeks to deny trans people the practical ability – indeed their very liberty – to participate equitably in the most promising avenues the State offers its citizens to learn and prosper as adults.

Trans people exist in my school and every other one. They exist in our communities, our churches, and our families. In this bill, the State denies this reality to the devastating harm of real students, and to the embarrassment of Kansas' educational culture. Protect Kansas' students. Protect Kansas' teachers. Protect Kansas' education. Reject Senate Bill 76.