

Testimony of Gail James, PhD, MainStream Coalition Board of Directors, in opposition to House Bill 2253

House Federal and State Affairs Committee, February 20, 2013

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee,

I speak before the Committee today in order to express my views as a citizen of Kansas, as an educator who is committed to health of young people, and as a woman who has seen the negative effects of poor health legislation upon the lives of women, girls and families.

I deplore the impact that House Bill 2253 under consideration in this legislative committee will have on women. After numerous restrictions on women's access to reproductive health in recent years, the current KS Legislature is seeking to advance legislation that further limits a woman's access to comprehensive healthcare, including abortion, and retracts her input regarding her own health. I am concerned about the consequences this legislation will have on real women's lives.

Of great concern to me are provisions that *further restrict, withhold and deny good health care*. One aspect of this text allows doctors to *withhold* information about a woman's pregnancy if the physician believes the information might potentially lead the woman to consider an abortion. Such a provision encourages unethical medical care and makes doctors complicit in poor medical treatment. Another aspect of this present text *denies information* to students that would assist their future development and decision-making. As an educator, I cannot agree that denying sexuality education is productive for our community, which requires informed, responsible behavior.

Women seek health care and advice from their physicians; they are not in a doctor's office for religious or moral posturing. Denying care and information shows a lack of commitment to healthcare, and certainly reinforces the idea that legislators are controlling women's health and choices. I ask for a re-commitment to real health care and real concern for women and their families. I remind you that this nation has affirmed women's privacy, her reproductive rights and the promise of gender equality.

Gail James, Ph.D  
Overland Park, KS  
Board of Directors, MainStream Coalition