

Landon State Office Bldg.
900 S.W. Jackson St., Suite 568 S.
Topeka, Kansas 66612-1258



Phone: (785) 296-3206
Fax: (785) 296-0589
TTY (785) 296-0245
800# 1-888-793-6874
www.khrc.net

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January 14, 2016

The Honorable John Barker, Chairperson, and Committee Members
House Committee on Judiciary
Statehouse, Room 519-N
Topeka, Kansas 66612

RE: H.B. 2323-Amending the Kansas Act Against Discrimination Regarding Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

Dear Representative Barker and Committee Members:

H.B. 2323 proposes to amend the Kansas Act Against Discrimination (KAAD) to add provisions prohibiting discrimination on the basis of "sexual orientation" or "gender identity" with regard to employment, housing and public accommodations.

The Kansas Human Rights Commission (KHRC) is responsible for administering and enforcing the provisions of the KAAD. The KHRC primarily accomplishes its mission through the receipt, investigation, and resolution of complaints alleging discrimination under the KAAD.

As an unbiased, fact-finding, investigative body, the KHRC takes a neutral stance on the proposed legislation. It is vital that "Probable Cause" or "No Probable Cause" determinations made in regards to complaints filed with this agency be accepted with credibility. Therefore, we have not taken a stance on this bill in order to avoid presumptions that we may favor one side or the other if this legislation is adopted.

If H.B. 2323 advances, we ask that the associated Fiscal Note of \$68,544 State General Fund and 1.00 Special Investigator II FTE be carried forward to FY 2017 and be approved to accomplish an increased workload. Agency resources have decreased over the past several years. The agency had 32.00 positions filled at the beginning of FY 2009, versus 16.5 positions filled at the beginning of the current fiscal year. Likewise, we had 12 Special Investigator II positions filled at the beginning of FY 2009. We currently have seven Special Investigator II positions filled, plus a part-time staffing agency employer performing Special Investigator work.

We will be available at today's hearing should you have any questions. Thank you, in advance, for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Ruth Glover
Executive Director