

**Testimony House Judiciary Committee
Opposition to HB 2466
Sister Therese Bangert
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I am not a stranger to the Kansas Legislative debates about policy that impacts immigrants. My community, the Sisters of Charity of Leavenworth, asked me to begin advocating for the rights of immigrants in this body in 2002. I feel that our Catholic Church and the world are blessed with the fervent and active advocacy for immigrants from Pope Francis:

**The Church is mother and her motherly attention is expressed with special tenderness and closeness to those who are obliged to flee their own country and exist between rootlessness and integration. This tension destroys people. Christian compassion — this “suffering with”, compassion — is expressed first of all in the commitment to obtain knowledge of the events that force people to leave their homeland, and, where necessary, to give voice to those who cannot manage to make their cry of distress and oppression heard.
(5/24/13)**

Concerns about HB 2466:

- **Local Law Enforcement Resources:** Vital resources could be diverted to enforcing federal issues instead of expending those resources on pressing issues that affect local communities.
- **Extra Liability for Cities:** How will the law be enforced? State and local police do not have the authority to enforce immigration laws (U.S. v. Arizona) and if this bill is passed, they will be forced to do so. There are instances where law enforcement detained individuals in compliance with priority enforcement programs and were later determined to have wrongfully detained U.S. citizens and were held liable as a result.

HB 2466 is not a solution to anything. The solution that I urge is that you contact our Kansas Congressional Delegation and ask them to work for Comprehensive Immigration Reform. That is the solution and it is the responsibility of Congress.

In closing I would like to share my own reflection. I did absolutely nothing to choose my place of birth. Right now I could easily be a starving Grandmother in Syria rejoicing at the sight of the trucks of the International Red Cross bringing food and blankets to my starving-blockaded city. Or I could be a Grandmother in Honduras weeping in anguish over the dead body of my grandson who refused to join a gang. Yet, I am here.

Let us reach out to our immigrant sisters and brothers who are truly reaching for the STARS through difficulties - difficulties that are impossible for me to even imagine.

Again I quote Pope Francis:

When the stranger in our midst appeals to us, we must not repeat the sins and the errors of the past. We must resolve now to live as nobly and as justly as possible, as we educate new generations not to turn their back on our “neighbors” and everything around us. Building a nation calls us to recognize that we must constantly relate to others, rejecting a mindset of hostility in order to adopt one of reciprocal subsidiarity, in a constant effort to do our best. I am confident that we can do this. (Congress 9/24/15)

With this confidence and Hope, I thank you for hearing me today.

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