

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE FEDERAL & STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Vice-Chairperson Becky Hutchins at 1:40 p.m. on March 12, 2002 in Room 313-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Representative Melany Barnes, Excused
Representative Lisa Benlon, Excused
Representative Joann Freeborn, Excused
Representative Broderick Henderson, Excused
Representative Doug Mays, Excused
Representative Candy Ruff, Excused

Committee staff present: Mary Torrence, Revisor of Statutes
Russell Mills, Legislative Research Analyst
Shelia Pearman, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:
Representative Mary Cook
Representative Dan Williams
Amy Bruner, Kansas Association of School Boards
Barbara Duke, KS Choice Alliance
Dianne Gjerstad, Wichita Public School
Charley Morasch, Consultant/Historian
Reverend Williard T. Reece, Kansas Religious Leaders for Choice
Sylvie Rueff, N.O.W.

Others attending: See attached list

Vice-Chair Hutchins opened the hearing on **HB 2833 - Requiring school students to recite part of the declaration of independence and take courses concerning the declaration of independence and the bill of rights; exceptions.** Representative Cook stated the survival of freedom in America depends on the survival of a basic understanding of our Declaration of Independence and is the strongest weapon we have against terrorism. She also stated the Declaration of Independence is about recognizing our common humanity and how each person deserves to be treated with respect and human dignity. She urged the committee to support **HB 2833**. (Attachment #1)

Mr. Morasch has written history and government standards for Boards of Education in various states. He stated an accurate understanding of our political history is not possible without understanding the primary principles embodied in the Declaration of Independence. Yet, he stated students in America's public school have no understanding of the foundations of our legal system, nor of the Declaration of Independence, or of the Constitution. He urged the committee to give our children the liberty to learn the truth by passing the Civil Rights Tribute Act **HB 2833**. (Attachment #2)

Ms. Bruner stated the Kansas Association of School Boards is opposed to **HB 2833** because it believes a district's curriculum should be established by the local board of education, not by state statute, as long as the district meets state accreditation requirements. (Attachment #3)

Written testimony was submitted by Harold Pederson, a member of the Individual Ready Reserve stating we do not want our children to become the terrorist's pawns or tools of tomorrow. (Attachment #4)

No other conferees appeared before the committee. The hearing on **HB 2833** was closed.

Vice-Chair Hutchins opened the hearing on **HB 2832 -Requiring instruction on fetal development and abortion in sex education.** Representative Williams stated **HB 2832** requires any organization receiving funding from the State of Kansas teach the stages of pregnancy in four-week increments, the methods and techniques of abortion, and the effects of an abortion on the fetus. (Attachment #5) He also stated the information is readily available and would require no additional funding to meet this requirement.

In submitted testimony, Lowell Ramsey stated Kansans for Life support **HB 2832** because it encourages

full discussion and disclosure of all the scientific information surrounding fetal development and abortion. (Attachment #6)

Rev. Reece referred to **HB 2832** as an inappropriate and transparent attempt to use truncated education about sex to accomplish a political goal. He cited statistics from a study encompassing France, Germany, the Netherlands and United States 15-19 year old teenagers births/abortions and sexually-related disease rates. (Attachment #7) Kansas Religious Leaders for Choice (KRLC), via a coalition of community leaders from schools, businesses, media and religious groups, is striving to initiate an educational campaign rather than have the Legislature present school boards an additional mandate.

Ms. Duke strongly opposed **HB 2832** citing various inaccuracies and omissions as well as the remedies for violation due to dissatisfaction with the way abortion is taught in school. (Attachment #8)

Ms. Gjerstad opposed **HB 2832** because Kansans value local control, leaving the toughest decision to be made in their more immediate area rather than a statute from the State. (Attachment #9)

Ms. Rueff also opposed **HB 2832** because of the mandated delivery of information but provided a list additional information to consider for inclusion. (Attachment #10)

The meeting adjourned at 3:08 p.m. The next scheduled meeting is March 13, 2002.