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H.B. 2267 Testimony
Presented by: Ruth Glover, Executive Director, Kansas Human Rights Commission
January 25, 2022

RE: H.B. 2267—An Act creating the Kansas Youth Advisory Council; prescribing purpose, members, meeting requirements and support thereof.

(Testimony is limited to the proposal that the Kansas Human Rights Commission coordinate and provide administrative support to the Kansas Youth Advisory Council.)

While the Kansas Human Rights Commission (KHRC) is honored to be proposed to provide coordination and administrative support to the proposed Kansas Youth Advisory Council, we recommend that the Kansas Youth Advisory Council, advocating on issues important to youth, would be more appropriately housed with other offices and commissions that have advocacy as part of their missions.

The Kansas Human Rights Commission, as the State's anti-discrimination agency in employment, housing, and public accommodations, is a neutral, fact-finding, investigative agency, not an advocacy body. The Kansas Human Rights Commission is responsible for administering and enforcing the provisions of the Kansas Act Against Discrimination and the Kansas Age Discrimination in Employment Act. The KHRC primarily accomplishes its mission through the receipt, investigation, and resolution of complaints alleging discrimination under the Kansas Act Against Discrimination and/or the Kansas Age Discrimination in Employment Act.

An advocate Youth Advisory Council aligns better with the other advocacy offices and commissions, and the council could build better synergy with like offices and commissions. The advocacy offices and commissions would have expertise, business practices, contacts, and resources to help establish and guide a youth advisory council. Some issues important to youth might overlap with matters that are a priority to other advocacy offices and commissions.

Also, advocating on issues important to youth has the potential to conflict with the KHRC's neutral stance in the receipt, investigation, and resolution of discrimination complaints.

The Kansas Human Rights Commission will implement any duties assigned to it by the Legislature to the best of our abilities but hope the above information can be helpful as you consider the best course for HB 2267. I am available for any questions. Thank you for your consideration.