

**Testimony by Rev. Caroline Dean in Opposition to HB 2717**  
**House Fed and State Committee, Rep. John Barker, Chair**  
**March 15, 2022**

Good morning. My name is Rev. Caroline Dean. I grew up in the Baptist tradition and I am ordained as a minister in the United Church of Christ. I live in Lawrence, Kansas (with my husband and our two young children).

First and foremost, thank you for the work of this committee and for your time today.

I would like to offer a testimony that helps you understand why I stand against HB 2717.

We are all gut-wrenched by what we are witnessing in Ukraine. I have done service-learning work in Nicaragua where so many families have been ravaged by gang violence and have been forced to leave their home to find safe spaces for the kids and families. Our church's youth and mentors are traveling this summer to the border in Texas, to learn more about nonprofits organizations that support refugees and immigrants.

As a pastor, a Christian, and a parent, I stand with those families who are in survival mode seeking a new home - like so many families have done before them. I stand with cities that have chosen to open their resources to support immigrant families. I stand with community policing efforts that keep the lines of communication with immigrant communities open - to pursue safety, while also upholding the dignity of the communities that they are sworn to protect. Community policing efforts that work with and alongside immigrants make my community safer as a whole.

I find it hard to believe that Jesus would exclude war-ravaged, desperate families and individuals from the resources that they need to thrive.

In Jesus' context, children were cut off from wider society and treated as lesser citizens. He famously says, "let the children come to me." How much more would Jesus greet the immigrant children who have travelled so far, survived so much? I write to you as a person striving to humbly follow in Jesus' example.

Thank you for your time.

Blessings for this day.

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