



Senate Committee on Education
Chair, Sen. Molly Baumgardner
Hearing on Tuesday, February 23, 2021

Position – OPPOSE SB 208

Chair Baumgardner, and Members of the Committee,

The Mainstream Coalition strongly opposes passage of SB 208, designed to discriminate against children.

Proponents of this bill say that it provides a “level playing field” for girls practicing sports, by preventing transgender girls and women from participating in girls sports. We contend that, rather than providing fairness, it perpetuates the idea that some in our society deserve less than others, by the simple fact of their existence.

Our fundamental difference with proponents is this: we refuse to cause harm to children based on something about which they have no choice, be it race, sexual orientation, culture, economic circumstance, or yes, gender identity. The only way proponents can support discriminating against these children is by purporting that their identity is a choice, and that any consequences are ones they have brought on themselves.

Legislators are expected to represent all of their constituents, to not give in to a tyranny of the majority. We understand that legislators may be proposing this bill out of compassion and care for children they know. We urge legislators to consider also the families and children on the other side, who are desperate to be accepted, to be treated as normal, to participate with their peers. They, too, deserve your compassion.

If this appeal to do what is right is not compelling, then we trust the proponents will bring facts with their arguments, not just anecdotes. Is there, in fact, a problem this bill will solve? Or is this a case of legislation proposed in a vacuum, propelled by national groups and taken up in many states as part of a culture war?

We urge Kansas legislators to look to *our* state, look to *our* children. We humbly suggest that teaching our children to accept each other in love is a greater goal than teaching them to win at all costs.

Please oppose passage of SB 208.

Thank you,

Michael Poppa, Executive Director of the Mainstream Coalition
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Founded in 1993, the Mainstream Coalition is a nonpartisan nonprofit that advocates for common sense public policy in Kansas. Our members do more than vote.

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