

**February 13, 2023; 1:30 pm**  
House Committee on Education  
Rep. Adam Thomas, Chair

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**HB2238** – Creating the "fairness in women's sports" act to require that female student athletic teams only include members who are biologically female.

**Opponent, Written Only**

Chair Thomas and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide Opponent testimony on HB2238.

I am Dr. T. Anansi Wilson, Associate Professor of Law and Founding Director of the Center for the Study of Black Life and the Law. I was born and raised in rural Kansas--Fort Scott to be exact--and later grew up in Olathe before winning the Kansas Boys State competition in high school. As I've travelled the world, from our beloved heartland to the mountains of South Africa and the ancient ruins of Izmir, nothing has kept me more grounded than the simple yet seemingly holy values that I learned as a country boy in rural Kansas.

I was raised to single folks out for praise due to their leadership and the content of their character and never to put a target on someone's back because they're different, hard to understand or even contrary to my deeply held views. Back home, back in my day--and not too long, I just turned 33 ya'll--we had a saying that went something like "sweep around your own front door, before you try and sweep around mine." That symbolized, to me of course, the beauty of Kansas and central ethos of the right to be left alone. I often turn to Kansas when I teach the 4th amendment in constitutional law and liberties classes, as a prime example of the ethos of freedom, that notion of being left alone whenever possible, the right to be undisturbed by the governments prying eyes or edicts on high.

I don't have any transgender nieces or nephews yet, that I know of, but I can tell you this. I don't like bullies. Can't countenance them. I've taught my nearly dozen nieces and nephews that bullies are enemies of freedom, enemies of justice and enemies of thought and free speech the opposite of leadership. Bills like this make me question that. What am I tell my niece Imani, or my nephew AJ, when they ask why the legislature is bullying children? What am I tell them about why the state leadership is spending time regulating child's play when their mother barely survived postpartum depression and complications after the recent birth of their sister Myra Love? What am I to tell them about your leadership when that same mother, just a day after having Myra, was laid off on unpaid family leave, struggling to put food on the table? Am I tell to my niece Myra that it was more important to this legislature to regulate child's play than to make

sure a baby girl lives long enough, has food enough, has a mother with enough life after subpar healthcare, to make it to the playground?

This ain't the Kansas way. We aren't bullies. We don't single folks out. We don't spend time regulating how folks raise their children or what kids call themselves. We're serious people who don't imagine laws regulating recreational joy as the top issues for a legislature. We've never wanted the government in bedroom, our playgrounds or even our living rooms. The kids are alright, its the adults that are the problem. Let the kids play.

I want to thank this committee for its investment in freedom and the livelihood of kansas children. I'm thankful that I grew in rural Kansas where it was common place to stay outside, all night and day, and to come home well after the streetlights came on and the possums were coming down the trees. My Kansas upbringing and education allowed me to move from poverty, to professor of law with a jd and phd at only at 33 and I'm grateful for the work this committee is doing to make sure that my story is more common, than anomaly. I can tell you now, this bill ain't the way of good natured, common sense, privacy loving, small government Kansas folk. I urge you to return to our roots, "where seldom is heard, a disparaging word." Be blessed and the kindness and care of the good book, and our history as an early frontier of freedom, lead you.