



**House Committee on Federal & State Affairs
Neutral Testimony on House Bill 2044
Presented by Eric Stafford, Vice President of Government Affairs**

Thursday, February 16, 2023

Mister Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Eric Stafford, Vice President of Government Affairs for the Kansas Chamber. The Kansas Chamber appreciates the opportunity to submit neutral testimony to House Bill 2044, a bill amending the definition of “race” in the Kansas act against discrimination.

The Kansas Chamber very much supports and respects the current protections that Kansans have under our current laws ensuring that no person is discriminated against because of their race. It is our belief that discrimination against certain hair styles is already prohibited. However, proponents of the bill have outlined their concerns and listened to ours as well regarding unintended consequences that potentially impact an employer’s ability to enforce dress codes and ensure the safety of their employees, and compliance with OSHA standards.

We have strong concerns that SB 130 would create unintended consequences as it relates to the impact on an employers’ ability to enforce dress codes and ensure the safety of their employees especially as it relates to OSHA standards.

In those discussions, we were pointed to Nebraska’s law which offers specific protections for employers that seem suitable. One suggested addition to their language we have asked of proponents would be to add language allowing law enforcement and the National Guard to “impose their own dress or grooming standards” that applies to all employers, not just law enforcement or military personnel.

Thank you for the opportunity to submit neutral testimony on House Bill 2044, and I’m happy to answer any questions at the appropriate time.