

Jay Bohanon
Written Opposition to SB180
March 6, 2023

Dear Committee on Public Health and Welfare,

My name is Jay Bohanon. I was born and raised in Wichita, and I currently live in Leawood. Many people in my life tell me that they have never met someone who loves their state as much as I do.

It is not uncommon for me to find a way to sneak in a fact about Kansas into just about every conversation. For instance, did you know that the original pride flag was created by a Kansan? Gilbert Baker who was born and raised in Chanute designed the original pride flag that has become ubiquitous with the LGBTQ+ movement.

As someone who identifies as a Kansan above all else, I am ashamed that our legislature would consider SB180 also known as the Women's Bill of Rights in the Free State. Did you know that in one of the original state constitutions it was proposed that Kansas would allow women the right to vote? If passed, Kansas would have given women the right to vote almost 70 years before it became legal in the United States.

Fast forward to today and this bill has nothing to do with women's rights and instead is a façade of hatred with unintended consequences that will negatively impact the same women it claims to protect. Kansas has a history of being a state before it's time and yet with this bill you want to set us back.

In addition to being a Kansan, I am also a transman. That means I was assigned female at birth but through gender affirming care which by the way saved my life, I appear as any other man. If this law were passed it would become illegal for people in the great state of Kansas to use a bathroom that doesn't correspond with their sex assigned at birth. Aside from the obvious issues (how can you tell, what if a birth certificate has been amended) let's talk about what this actually looks like in the real world.

In my case, it looks like me, a man, using the women's restroom. For those of you who support this bill is that what you want, people like me (men) using the women's restroom? Under this law I would have to. I have no interest in the consequences of breaking laws so I would obey it.

This means every time I use the bathroom in public, I will likely be harassed for being a man in the women's restroom. Not only is this uncomfortable and undesirable for me personally, but I can only imagine what it will be like for the women you claim to be protecting. Yet, as a person who was born with a vagina, legally this is what you are requiring me to do.

By passing this bill you are essentially mandating that every time I or anyone like me goes to the restroom in public, we will have to announce that we have a vagina, and we are just trying to follow the law. I'm going to assume that's not the outcome you were intending.

John Brown didn't fight for this to become a free state only for us to humiliate and dehumanize each other. The inception of this state was as a leader on the side of what is right. Now is not the time to tarnish that legacy with such an ill-advised bill. Members of the Committee I urge you to allow our state to continue to rise to the stars instead of bringing us down to the likes of Missouri and other states we have fought so hard to distinguish ourselves from.

Thank you for your consideration,
Jay Bohanon