

## TESTIMONY OR PRESENTATION INFORMATION FOR HOUSE ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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Please send all testimony or presentations in pdf format 24 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting to [Gary.Deeter@House.ks.gov](mailto:Gary.Deeter@House.ks.gov)

Name of Conferee/Presenter \_\_\_ Connie Brown Collins

Agency represented \_Voter Rights Network of Wyandotte County Bill # HB 2376

Proponent  Opponent  Neutral

Will your testimony be given: Oral In Person

Oral Via WebEx

Written Only

If you are presenting testimony via WebEx, you will need to be sent an invitation to join the meeting. Please provide your email address.

Email address - [conniejbrown53@gmail.com](mailto:conniejbrown53@gmail.com)

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Thank you,  
Committee Assistant: Gary Deeter 785-296-7451; Room 281-N

TO: House Committee on Local Government  
FR: Connie Brown Collins,  
Voter Rights Network of Wyandotte County  
RE: HB 2376  
Date: February 14, 2023

Dear Mr. Chairman and House Local Government Committee:

My name is Connie Brown Collins, Founder/Director of Voter Rights Network of Wyandotte County. I live in Kansas City, Kansas. We host regular meetings on voting rights and other pertinent issues to our communities with a number of participating organizations, from both Wyandotte and Johnson Counties.

I strongly oppose HB 2376 that voids the adoption or enforcement of any local ordinance, resolution or regulation related to discrimination on the basis of race, religion, color, sex, disability, national origin or ancestry that is more restrictive than the provisions of the Kansas act against discrimination.

Though the bill also prohibits recording restrictive covenants and authorizes removal of such covenants, I cannot in good conscience support a bill that swaps one form of discrimination for another.

The discrimination laws currently in place often particularly provide checks and balances for employment and other forms of discrimination. Workplace discrimination harms the workers who experience it, exacerbates structural and longstanding inequities in the labor market, and holds back economic growth and dynamism. As a result of these continuing practices by employers, millions of workers continue to face discrimination and remain vulnerable to unfair, inequitable, and often illegal workplace practices. Especially at risk are mostly low-income workers who must deal with employers who ignore labor market laws and regulations, and engage in harassment, taking advantage of structural racism and sexism that limit outside options and economic security for workers of color, women, LGBTQ individuals and, in particular, women workers of color such as Black and Native American women. These laws also protect LGBTQ and other marginalized groups from harassment.

Discrimination in employment affects workers' mental and physical health, increases job turnover, holds back upward career mobility, and inhibits workers' ability to build wealth. By hurting the life and economic outcomes of workers who experience it, the unfair treatment of workers because of their race, gender, sexual orientation or other protected characteristics also reproduces longstanding inequities and robs the Kansas economy of talent that would otherwise make it more dynamic.

Areas of employment that are affected by anti-discrimination laws include hiring, termination, promotion, retaliation and harassment, all critical aspects of workplace life.

Even with current local laws and ordinances in place, historically marginalized workers continue to face both systemic employment discrimination and unfair treatment at work that ultimately contributes to economic inequality, lost talent, and constrained economic growth. Effective enforcement of anti-discrimination protections is a first step toward challenging systems that maintain racial and gender economic divides.

Further, the effective enforcement of local anti-discrimination and anti-harassment provisions can help narrow persistent and longstanding inequities in employment market outcomes that have diminished allocation of talent and held back workers from sharing in the economic growth to which they contribute. Lessening discrimination against workers is a basic building block of an equitable labor market.

I strongly urge the committee to oppose HB 2376, and moreover to continue and even strengthen the fair and just treatment of currently protected individuals in local workplaces and beyond. To remove these protections would weaken our economy and deprive workers of necessary safeguards to thrive and be productive members of society.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony to the committee.

Respectfully submitted,

Connie Brown Collins  
Voter Rights Network of Wyandotte County