

Liz Hamor, CEO of Center of Daring
Written Opposition Testimony regarding HB 2376
House Committee on Local Government
February 15, 2023 - 9am

Dear House Committee on Local Government,

I'm a suburban soccer mom, a wife, a business owner, a leadership consultant and coach, a Christian, and a longtime LGBTQ advocate. You may know me from my time doing advocacy with either GLSEN Kansas or Equality Kansas. While I don't represent either of those organizations currently, I will continue to do LGBTQ advocacy as long as there is a need.

Since more anti-LGBTQ bills have been introduced this year than anytime in the last decade, there's definitely a need for my work.

I'm here to ask you to oppose HB 2376. I was one of the advocates that worked to pass the LGBTQ-inclusive non-discrimination ordinance in Wichita, KS, so I have a deep understanding of why inclusive NDOs are important, but also, I have questions like:

Wouldn't HB 2376 violate [Home Rule from our Kansas Constitution](#)? I'm no expert here, but it seems something worthy of asking a few good attorneys.

The following is an excerpt from an [op-ed I wrote from the Kansas Reflector](#) to answer commonly asked questions about Wichita's NDO. I had at least one political science professor verify the information before I submitted it.

"Question: Do cities even have the authority to make an LGBTQ-inclusive nondiscrimination ordinance?"

Answer: Yes! Kansas is what is known as a "Home Rule" state because of a 1961 amendment to our state constitution. Article 12 § 5 (b) of the Kansas Constitution begins, "Cities are hereby empowered to determine their local affairs and government." Essentially, our state constitution grants cities and counties the ability to pass laws to govern themselves as they deem appropriate. The caveat is that these laws cannot conflict with any state or federal laws. They can be stronger or broader than the state and federal level, but never weaker. That means they can't offer less protection."

Let's just say for a moment that this bill doesn't violate Article 12 § 5 (b) of the state constitution... Are state legislators, who often say they believe in local control, going to take that local control away from municipalities? Based on what? Animus against LGBTQ people?

HB 2376 would remove protections based on sexual orientation and gender identity in several municipalities across the state, and I promise you, the protections provided are much needed. Wichita locals had to sit through several hours of anti-LGBTQ testimony and sentiment during

the debates around the inclusive Wichita NDO, ironically proving the need for such protections. Thankfully, there were also hours of LGBTQ-affirming individuals, organizations, faith leaders, parents, community members, businesses, and large corporations speaking in support of the ordinance.

LGBTQ-inclusive NDOs not only protect LGBTQ people, but they also set the tone for how the community will treat people, and they provide a bold statement to LGBTQ individuals and families that they can belong and feel safe in the community.

I believe that latter reason is why Cargill provided testimony in support of the Wichita NDO. They spoke about their values of inclusion and how they want to be able to attract and retain talent. That's hard to do when people won't come to our state or our cities because of a lack of inclusion.

If we want Kansas communities where respect for everyone (even those with whom we disagree) is a common value and *behavior*, then we have to have policies that show respect is expected. Inclusive NDOs is one way we do that. Doing leadership and voting in opposition of anti-LGBTQ legislation is another.

Please vote NO on HB 2376.

If you have any questions, I'm happy to do my best to answer them.

With hope,
Liz Hamor, she/her
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