

House Committee on Local Government  
Chair, Rep. Emil Bergquist  
Hearing: February 15, 2023

Jan Faidley  
Written Testimony

Position – OPPOSE HB 2376; Regarding Racially Discriminatory Language and Repeal/Prohibition of Local Non-discrimination Ordinances

Chair Bergquist and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit opposition testimony on HB2376.

I currently serve as Council Member for Ward 1 of the City of Roeland Park, KS. In such capacity I have learned over the last four years about the concept of Home Rule - the idea that in representative government those closest to the people can best make decisions for the people. I have found this to be true over and over again - whether in repairing streets, redesigning city amenities or planning events that represent all members of our community. It is indeed what makes our local governments "tick."

The repeal of Roeland Park's Non-discrimination Ordinance (NDO) would fly in the face of all that I have heard from the residents of my Ward. Many of them spent years advocating and working for the passage of such protections. It is indeed the reason why so many have chosen to make their homes in our City and raise their families here. The idea that no one can discriminate against you and if they do, our City will stand with you - has drawn people and businesses here.

As an educator of middle school and high school students, I see how important inclusion is in their development. Everyone wants to be accepted and to belong. This bill would make them feel like they had a target on their backs once again - in the very place where they live.

Passing any policy at the local level is challenging. Passing an NDO is not a fight I would take on lightly if I was not certain of the support of my community. So, once again - are we free to rule ourselves? Does Home Rule still exist in Kansas?

I find it heinous that the original legislation proposed by Representative Xu to help cities and counties eliminate racially discriminatory language from property documents should be tied to the repeal of already passed and accepted local NDO ordinances. Please consider separating these two issues as they do not and should not be considered together.

In closing, I reiterate my opposition to HB2376 as now being considered and challenge the committee to look at the merit of the original issue of removing racially discriminatory language. Thank you for considering my testimony.