



Written Opponent Testimony HB 2238

For the Senate Education Committee

March 6, 2023

Katrina Abraham

Government Affairs, The Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce

Chair Baumgardner and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on HB 2238. The Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce (KC Chamber) writes to state its opposition to House Bill 2238 on the grounds that such legislation is discriminatory and will do great damage to both Kansas City area and Kansas employers and impede economic development, growth and innovation in our state and region.

Our Chamber members have told us time and time again that fairness, equal treatment, and opportunity are central to their corporate values and these values are critical to workforce recruitment, productivity, and their bottom lines. When Kansas enacts discriminatory policies such as the restrictions in HB 2238, these measures and the publicity surrounding them severely impact employers' ability to recruit and retain a much-needed workforce. This is particularly true during this period of full employment (KC metro area unemployment rate is 2.6%) when our employers must recruit from throughout the country for jobs here in Kansas.

Data shows Millennial and Gen Z workforce members want to work in welcoming states and communities with diverse populations and visibly inclusive policies that support engagement, belonging and safety for all residents. Many KC Chamber members have shared stories about losing workforce recruits from other metro areas due to state policy that is perceived as discriminatory and exclusionary. Business leaders also tell us they hear from employees and recruits who fear the lack of safety and inclusion for themselves and their children in states where anti LGBTQ legislation is pursued. Discriminatory legislation such as HB 2238 is a significant barrier to employers' abilities to convince other people to call the wonderful state of Kansas home.

The KC Chamber is further concerned that the national perception of intolerance that is sure to follow the passage of HB 2238 would impede the state's ability to secure national conventions and college and professional athletic events. Organizers of these national and international sporting events have told us they want to host events in inclusive cities where all can compete and thrive. These events, many of which bring in hundreds of millions of dollars in local and state revenue, are vital to the Kansas City area and Kansas economy.

For the reasons described above, the KC Chamber opposes HB 2238 and urges this committee and the Kansas legislature to reject it.

Katrina Abraham

Greater Kansas City Chamber of Commerce

kabraham@kcchamber.com