



Senate Committee on Federal & State Affairs

Written Only Neutral Testimony on Senate Bill 36

Presented by William Wilk, Senior Director of Government Affairs

Thursday, January 11, 2024

Mister Chairman and members of the committee, my name is William Wilk, Senior Director of Government Affairs for the Kansas Chamber. The Kansas Chamber appreciates the opportunity to submit neutral testimony to Senate Bill 36, a bill amending the definition of ancestry in the Kansas act of discrimination.

The Kansas Chamber very much supports and respects the current protections that Kansans have under our current laws ensuring that no person is discriminated against because of their race or ancestry. The Kansas Chamber provided neutral testimony on a bill like SB 36 in the 2023 session, that bill was HB 2044. It is our belief that discrimination against certain hair styles is already prohibited. However, proponents of the bill have outlined their concerns and listened to ours as well regarding unintended consequences that potentially impact an employer's ability to enforce dress codes and ensure the safety of their employees, and compliance with OSHA standards.

We have strong concerns that SB36 would create unintended consequences as it relates to the impact on an employers' ability to enforce dress codes and ensure the safety of their employees as it relates to OSHA standards.

In the discussions from the previous year, we were pointed to Nebraska's law which offers specific protections for employers that seem suitable. One suggested addition to their language we have asked of proponents would be to add language like law enforcement and the National Guard to "impose their own dress or grooming standards" that applies to all employees, not just law enforcement or military personnel.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today, and I'm happy to answer any questions you might have at the appropriate time.