

LOUD LIGHT CIVIC ACTION

Melissa Stiehler
Loud Light Civic Action
Written Opponent Testimony of HB 2446
For the Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee

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Chair Thompson and members of the Committee,

Thank you so much for the opportunity to provide testimony today. My name is Melissa Stiehler, and I serve as Advocacy Director of Loud Light Civic Action, a Kansas based, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization that supports and builds the civic engagement and leadership of young people in our state. With respect to the Kansas Constitutional Right to Home Rule, Loud Light Civic Action opposes HB 2446.

Loud Light Civic Action strongly values the self determination and health of the democratic rule of our local governments. When the state legislature preempts local control and the people's will through unnecessary state mandates, it undercuts the ability of the people of Kansas to enact local policy that best represents their own community's needs and values.

In respect to the young Kansans we represent, their first act of civic engagement is often through municipal action. When Kansans feel discouraged at their ability to impact policy at the national level, they can become civically empowered through working with their local government to improve the community they live in. When the state legislature continues to restrict local government's ability to engage meaningfully with their constituents through legislation such as HB 2446, it not only weakens local control but it disempowers young people from participating in civic life.

Many members of the legislature concern themselves with crafting policies aimed at making sure young Kansans see their home state as a place they can stay and raise their families. By opposing HB 2446 and other preemption bills, you can send a clear message that the people of Kansas can build and support their own communities in meaningful ways, rather than moving out of state to find that opportunity elsewhere. I strongly urge members of this committee to put our free state values into action by opposing HB 2446. Thank you all for your time and I hope you take my testimony into consideration.