



Central States Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
God's work. Our hands.

February 15, 2023

Written Testimony in Opposition to SB180 - "Women's Bill of Rights"
Senate Committee of Public Health and Welfare

Dear Committee Members:

My name is the Rev. Susan Candea. I have been an ordained minister in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America for almost forty years and currently serve as the bishop of the Central States Synod of the ELCA, overseeing the ministry of 150 congregations and other ministries across Kansas and Missouri.

I am writing because I strongly oppose SB180. While the title of the bill is "establishing the women's rights bill," from my perspective this is about imposing a narrow definition of gender identity on all individuals regardless of their own understandings of themselves. We do not have the right to do that. Medical science has helped us to understand that gender identity is much more fluid that has been acknowledged in the past.

As a faith community, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, both recognizes and respects non-binary gender identities. Recognizing the diversity of humanity – which should not surprise us given the diversity of the world we live in – does not impose limitations or unfairness on those who do in fact identify in binary categories. Rather it supports us to be a more compassionate, respectful, and just society where all individuals are valued.

I urge you therefore to reframe the narrative away from the rights of a few vocal voices to impose their reality on others and toward bills and actions that truly protect the rights of all people, regardless of their gender identity.

Thank you for your consideration and careful action in this matter.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Susan Candea, Bishop

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