



End discrimination based on sexual orientation and gender identity

– EMBARGOED RELEASE – February 6 2020 8:15am–

Equality Kansas condemns bill proposal targeting transgender and gender non-conforming children
Bill draft being circulated by a Kansas legislator would deny children the right to compete in school events

Topeka, Kans - Earlier this week, Equality Kansas obtained a copy of a bill draft being circulated by a Kansas legislator that would deny gender non-conforming and transgender children the right to compete in school sports.

“This bill’s sponsor already has a reputation of inappropriate behavior with children. He is now targeting children with a mean-spirited, dangerous, and discriminatory bill,” Thomas Witt, Equality Kansas executive director, said.

Rep. Michael Capps (R-Wichita), the bill sponsor, was the focus of an investigation by the Department for Children and Families amid complaints he had inappropriate physical contact with at-risk children. Although charges were not pursued because of technical errors in the investigation, he was subsequently barred from participating in the Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program.

“It’s no surprise that someone with Rep Capps’ reputation would be the driving force behind this bill,” Witt said. “If he were truly interested in the safety and welfare of children, he would work to end discrimination against the most vulnerable kids in our schools. Instead he wants to put a target on the back of every transgender and gender non-conforming child in Kansas – one of the populations most vulnerable to discrimination, bullying, and violence, and suicide.”

A 2019 study published by The Trevor Project, a national LGBTQ organization that works to prevent youth suicide, found that:

- 71% of LGBTQ youth reported discrimination due to either their sexual orientation or gender identity
- 39% of LGBTQ respondents seriously considered attempting suicide in the past twelve months
- Over 18% of LGBTQ respondents attempted suicide in the past twelve months
- 29% of transgender and non-binary youth respondents have attempted suicide
- 76% of the sample felt that recent politics impacted their mental health or sense of self

“We call on Capps to withdraw his bill. Should he persist and continue on this dangerous path, we will ask legislative leadership to kill this bill, and to instead move legislation that will actually protect children instead of singling them out for unfair treatment,” Witt said.

The House and Senate presently have bills pending that would include sexual orientation and gender identity in state laws banning discrimination. The bills, HB 2130 and SB 84 with 38 and 18 co-sponsors respectively, have not been given hearings despite widespread support for their passage. Additionally, a bill that would ban the dangerous and harmful practice of attempted “conversion therapy” on minors, HB 2483, has been introduced in the House, with a companion bill to be introduced in the Senate.

“Over one million Kansans live in cities and counties that have adopted non-discrimination ordinances inclusive of sexual orientation and gender identity. It’s time to move forward as a state, not backwards as Capps’ bill proposes to do,” Witt said. “It’s also time to end the destructive practice of ‘conversion therapy.’ We’d love to see this legislature move to protect children rather than entertain legislation that will certainly harm them,” Witt said.

Equality Kansas is the state’s leading LGBTQ advocacy organization, with chapters across the state.

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