



*End discrimination based on
sexual orientation and
gender identity*

Neutral In-Person Statement of Thomas Witt
Executive Director, Equality Kansas
HB 2469, Kansas foster parent bill of rights
House Committee on Children and Seniors

March 16, 2022

Greetings Chairwoman Concannon and committee members –

Equality Kansas is the leading LGBT advocacy organization in our state. We have had a full time presence in the statehouse since 2006, and in that time one of our main priorities has been protecting the LGBT community from discriminatory legislation, and the inclusion of sexual orientation and gender identity in Kansas statutes prohibiting discriminatory practices.

Today this committee is looking at two closely-related bills: this bill, HB 2468, the “Kansas foster youth bill of rights,” and HB 2469, the “Kansas foster parents bill of rights.” While HB 2469 includes a provision protecting foster parents from discrimination, it does not include LGBTQ families among its protected classes.

Taxpaying Kansas families should not be discriminated against by the very state to which we pay taxes, and that includes LGBTQ families. LGBTQ families across our state and our nation accept, foster, and adopt special needs children on a regular basis. Our families often provide permanent homes in cases where other families will not or cannot.

A 2013 study¹ published by the Williams Institute found that LGBTQ families provide foster care at six times the rate of non-LGBTQ families. We are a vital part of the youth foster care system, and deserve the same protections from discrimination as the other protected classes defined in this bill.

HB 2469 provides discrimination protections on the basis of “religion, race, color, creed, gender, marital status, national origin, age or physical handicap.” We ask that you amend HB 2469 to include protections for LGBTQ families by the inclusion of “sexual orientation and gender identity” as protected classes. With that amendment, Equality Kansas will work with the proponents for passage of this very necessary bill.

Thank you for your time and attention. I am available to stand for questions.

¹ LGBT Parenting in the United States, Gary J. Gates, PhD (February 2013)