

Dear Kansas State Senators:

My name is Julie Danielson. My family has lived in Kansas my whole life and I am writing as a private citizen as well as a representative of Music Theatre Kansas City, which is a local nonprofit organization and public theater located in Shawnee, Kansas.

MTKC serves the Kansas community by bringing in audiences as well as performers and staff from all over the region. In a typical quarter, we have over 3500 people in our audience seats and over 200 performers on stage. We are proud to be one of the premier training programs for youth interested in the performing arts. And we are also so proud to be a safe space for gay and trans youth / teens and LGBT staff in our organization.

We feel strongly that, in addition to the emotional support system that we can provide our students, our staff and our families, they deserve the protection and support from something bigger than that. And that would be from our local and state government.

As a Kansas business that works with hundreds of youth and children each year, we feel it is extremely important that you hear voices of LGBT support from people who work directly with children. The young citizens of Kansas need to feel safe, they need to feel protected. And like I said, we can do that to a certain extent. But we need your help.

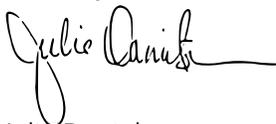
Our organization's motto is BE THE SUN. It comes from a poem by a woman named Elaine Laron, who wrote for Sesame Street and The Electric Company back in the 1970s. It's from a play called "Free to Be You and Me." It's a very short poem, but I have a tradition that I share it with my students and everyone in a production that we do. And I'd like to quickly share it with you and see what it might mean to you, because it means something different to everyone who hears it.

The sun is filled with shining light,
It blazes far and wide.
The moon reflects the sunlight back,
But has no light inside.

I think I'd rather be the sun
That shines so bold and bright.
Then be the moon that only glows
With someone else's light.

We teach our students to believe in themselves and to stand up for what they believe in, whatever that might be. What I believe might be different from what they believe and I still firmly believe that they need to stand up for themselves and be strong and shine their own light. The sun, when it chooses to shine, it shines on everyone. It doesn't discriminate. So I hope that you can BE THE SUN tonight and VOTE AGAINST SB208.

Sincerely,



Julie Danielson
9940 W. 66th Terr
Merriam, KS 66203