



MainStream Coalition
5960 Dearborn Street, #213
Mission, Kansas 66202-9905

★ Rational Voices for Irrational Times ★

913-649-3326 • www.mainstreamcoalition.org

Testimony to House Committee on General Government Budget
Chair, Representative Troy Waymaster
Friday, February 13, 2015 Committee Meeting, 1:30 PM Room 218-N
LaVerne Engelhardt, Assistant 785-296-7672, Laverne.Engelhardt@house.ks.gov

Position – Support
Kansas Transparency Act ([HB2148](#))

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Chairman Waymaster and Committee Members,

MainStream Coalition is a non-partisan, grassroots organization. We grew from an outpouring of concerns over the infringement of governmental separation of powers and of church and state. For over two decades now, we have worked to advocate for state policies that perpetuate good governance and traditional Kansas moderate values.

Toward these goals, the MainStream Coalition is in strong support of the Transparency Act.

Our member driven organization encourages active participation in the political process and reaching across the lines of political affiliation. A common denominator among our 2,500 members, and growing, is a high degree of civic engagement. MainStream Coalition members across the state are actively involved in public discourse at the local, state and federal levels and are dependent upon a certain measure of transparency from their elected officials. Transparency, more specifically, is a basis of good government. It allows for well-informed citizens, the ability to exercise our democratic rights and to play an active role in society.

At present however, the official business of the Kansas legislature is conducted in such a way that substantive and procedural information is relatively unavailable to the public at large – clouding the meaning of the information discussed and the rules and procedures governing the process. A common source of frustration among the MainStream Coalition members is this lack of accessibility to and disclosure of committee discussions and decisions that shape our state policies. Further, this lack of transparency prohibits any meaningful measure of accountability, both of which are repeatedly called for among the vast majority of Kansas legislators and administration.

Direct access to even a handful of committee meetings will move Kansas closer to the long waited opportunity to be more fully informed about the rationale and goals of proposed policy. The committee hearings are among the most substantive discussions on bills, yet the least accessible to Kansas citizens. Live audio broadcasts will serve to minimize barriers that frustrate legislators and constituents alike, moving all key stakeholders towards a mutual understanding of policy choices.

We encourage this committee to support HB2148. We support this pilot test in four select committee rooms. We support this statutory requirement to broadcasts in real time for public access and archives all broadcasts for later internet access and easy reference by the public.

Respectfully submitted,

Brandi Fisher, Executive Director
MainStream Coalition and Education Foundation
5960 Dearborn, Suite 213 • Mission, KS 66202
O|913.649.3326 • brandi@mainstreamcoalition.org
www.mainstreamcoalition.org