

Testimony of Barb Shirley  
Former mayor, City of Salina  
In Support of HB2323  
January 14, 2016

I am writing this as the former Mayor of the city Salina and am asking you to seriously consider HB 2323. The Kansas Act Against Discrimination is in place to prohibit discrimination, yet the LGBT community has been excluded from this.

In 2012 while I was serving our city as vice-mayor, we passed the anti-discrimination law that protected our LGBT citizens in the workplace. It was only in place a short time; however, I believe, because our citizens were misinformed being under the impression their children would be subjected to sharing public restrooms with transexuals, along with religious freedoms being taken away.

This Salina ordinance was NOT put into place to take away any individual religious freedoms, but to protect our LGBT community from both workplace harassment and housing issues.

We have lost many good people both straight and gay from our city and state because of this. I have personally witnessed both in and out of my time in office our LGBT community being let go from jobs without just cause, and having houses not rented to them simply because of their sexual preference.

My own gay son, after being harassed at his high school, was subjected to nearly two years of harassment at his workplace. Two years ago, he moved away from Kansas to escape an environment that condoned discrimination.

Everybody's jobs should be based on performance and qualifications - not sexual orientation. It should be unlawful to forbid employment for this reason, just as it is illegal to refuse work or fire someone who is a Christian or disabled.

America has become more accepting of our LGBT neighbors. It is time that Kansas takes that step to protect our friends and neighbors.

Thank you for your time  
Former Mayor Barb Shirley  
Salina, KS