

Thursday, January 16th, 2020

To: Kansas House Committee on Federal and State Affairs and Kansas Senate Judiciary Committee

From: Amber Versola, Overland Park, KS Resident

Re: Opposition to HCR 5019 - WRITTEN TESTIMONY ONLY

As a Kansan, mother of 2, and former community organizer, I oppose HCR 5019. I call on this committee to also stand against this resolution.

First, I am concerned with the accelerated track that this proposed amendment is taking, as well as the requirement for urgent ballot placement. Legislation doesn't normally move quickly. Last years' census amendment certainly didn't, and I can't identify a reason for this ones' speed. Concerned parties had about 24 hours after bill introduction to submit testimony for this committee hearing. Constitutional amendments aren't something to be taken lightly. Proposals for them should be vetted and debated thoroughly. This unusually expeditious track does not allow for the serious, thoughtful consideration that legislation of this magnitude deserves.

Section 3 requires this to be presented to voters in the upcoming August primary, unless a special election is called earlier. Why would a body of elected representatives - a body who represents the will of their electorate - want to put something as big as a constitutional amendment on the ballot, at a time when a substantially smaller percentage of their constituents turn out?

If there is confidence in the content of this amendment and in the Kansas electorate, put it on a ballot in an election when turnout is at its highest. Historically speaking, that would be the general during presidential election years. For example, the 2016 primary election produced a 22% turnout rate versus 67% in the general.

Finally, I'm concerned with the legislative intent of the proposed amendment.

Abortion regulations and restrictions have been debated in this building ad nauseum. There were times during the past decade where the number of new abortion related bills introduced during session has reached double digits. These bills range in topic from the font doctors must use in correspondence with patients to regulations on their office buildings (including, but not limited to the size of their janitorial closets). Our state house has become the testing grounds for overzealous abortion legislation - legislation that is based on emotional or personal points of view, rarely backed by scientific evidence, and is often struck down in costly court challenges.

The number and content of such laws have made Kansas a hostile place for women who seek this one legal medical procedure. HCR 5019 ensures that this will continue.

Quite frankly, I've had enough. My guess is that your voters are frustrated, too.

It's time to end unnecessary involvement by the State of Kansas in our private medical decisions. Your vote against this concurrent resolution, and against this amendment, signals that we are closer to making that a reality.

Thank you for your time in hearing my concerns. Please vote no on HCR 5019.

Sincerely,
Amber Versola
Overland Park