



★ Rational Voices for Irrational Times ★

MainStream Coalition
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Re: HB 2280
Before the House Education Committee
Testimony opposing HB 2280:
February 20, 2013

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I am testifying on behalf of the MainStream Coalition representing individuals and families throughout Kansas dedicated to upholding the Constitutional guarantees of freedom of religion based on the separation of church and state. HB2280 seems to say we should celebrate diversity in all its forms, like women's rights, and freedom of religion. All of that we applaud.

However, in reality HB2280 creates another unfunded mandate on our already financially and resource challenged public schools, and the reason is puzzling. The reason mentioned in the actual bill seems to say that schools are censoring our teachers or the facts. Nothing could be further from the truth. In addition, we know of no cases brought to any school district's attention that would seem to suggest there is a problem. In other words, this seems to be a solution looking for a problem.

Our public schools already provide instruction and have curriculum designed to teach American history and American government and civics lessons to Kansas school children, all of which is age and grade appropriate. This includes instruction about the US Constitution and the Declaration of Independence and of course includes discussion of freedom of religion, one of our country's founding principals and one of this organization's driving forces.

For the Kansas legislature to dictate in legislation, such as HB2280, what must be taught and when in the school year this must be taught is unnecessary, intrusive, and costly.

When the Kansas legislature dictates what the specifics of instruction in Kansas public schools must be, they add time and costs to already strapped schools to teach everything that is required. There exist other bodies in Kansas that are charged with these responsibilities, including locally elected school boards of education and they should be allowed to do their jobs. Anyone understanding the history of the United States including the creation of our country and the intent of the Constitution knows that the Founders explicitly determined that there would be no state religion, recognizing the evils of religious persecution that come from such an establishment.

Therefore, we, The Mainstream Coalition, respectfully ask that you vote no on this unnecessary and costly piece of legislation.

Sincerely,

Micheline Burger
MainStream Coalition, Past President/Board Member