

Testimony in Opposition of SB208
Jacob McCarty, Student
Senate Education Committee

My name is Jacob McCarty, and I am a sophomore at Eisenhower High School in Goddard, Kansas. I am a cisgender white male and an active member in my church and school community. I have recently started a youth led group about mental illness and suicide prevention. Mental illness has been a big part of my life as I have struggled with depression and anxiety for years. It is my goal to help people with their problems and break the stigmas of mental illness. I am afraid of the ramifications that this bill will have on transgender youth in respect to both their mental and physical health.

I have many friends who are a part of the LGBTQ+ community, and all of them have faced discrimination in some form. Discrimination has come from their peers, families, and members of our community. A large majority suffer from depression and anxiety which is in no small part related to the bullying they undergo for their sexual orientation and gender identification. I don't find it a coincidence that these are linked. This legislation will negatively impact these people's mental and physical health but not allowing them to be themselves and participate in the things that they value and find important.

I want to help protect these kids and their families. The government is supposed to help and protect the people it represents and serves. Legislation like this, not only is oppressive to their freedoms, but once again opens them up to continued bullying. The LGBTQ+ community should not be feared because of generalized lack of education and misunderstanding about this group of people. Instead of promoting these misperceptions, we should be embracing the LGBTQ+ community and learning how to best support and protect them in their journey. This is why I am opposed to this bill. I appreciate your consideration in this very important issue.

Jacob McCarty