

Testimony: Cassie E. Brown, MSW, LCSW – National Association of Social Workers- Missouri Chapter
Committee: Transportation, Infrastructure, and Operations Committee
Date: Wednesday, May 10, 2023
Time: 9:00am
Room: VIA ZOOM

Good morning, Chair and Members of the Committee.

My name is Cassie Brown, and I am the Executive Director of the National Association of Social Workers, Missouri Chapter. Social workers are the largest mental health workforce in Missouri. We provide services to thousands of people across Kansas City.

First, social workers want to thank Councilmember Boo, Mayor Lucas and Councilmember Bunch for bringing forward a forward-thinking Resolution that would put Kansas City's public policy in line with **over half of our nation** that according to the Pew Research Center **do not support** efforts to make it illegal to provide medically necessary care to transgender individuals. **Such as SB 39 and 49 which just passed.**

Over half of the United States already by law or explicit interpretation protect their LGBTQ+ citizens from discrimination in housing, hiring, and public accommodations.

This is an intelligent expansion of these protections.

This is a **workforce issue**. This is an issue that **college students look at** when considering whether or not to study at a Missouri college or university, and **professionals, individuals, and families consider** when looking at whether to stay or leave, or come and share their skills in a place, such as Kansas City. And this is an **income issue**: conferences and conventions care about the compassion of the cities they invest in.

This is an issue that impacts all people, regardless of gender identity or expression.

I am pleased that Kansas City and its citizens have consistently showed up in Jefferson City throughout this session against anti-trans legislation, where I saw and held frightened trans children and adults as they shook in fear as legislation that violated their medical privacy advanced.

But I am a social worker, a clinician. I am speaking for social workers. I hear regularly from social workers who speak out of concern and fear that the clients they serve will not receive the medically necessary services that they assess that they ethically require.

Kansas Citizens deserve to receive the medical care that is indicated by mental and medical health professionals. Kansas City should be, and can be, a leader on healthcare for its citizens, led by best medical practices as well as compassion. Clinical social workers want a vulnerable population to receive the services they need.

We SUPPORT RESOLUTION 230385

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For these reasons and more, NASW-MO strongly supports and encourage your vote on this resolution. Thank you.