

Kansas House of Representatives
Committee on Federal and State Affairs
Rep. John Barker, Chair
Rep. Ron Highland, Vice Chair

WRITTEN TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2687 THE ADOPTION PROTECTION ACT

Tuesday, March 20, 2018
9:00 a.m.
346-S

Chairman Barker, Vice Chair Highland, and members of the committee:

Thank you for providing the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of House Bill 2687. We, the undersigned, are pastors representing congregations across Kansas. We are united in support of HB 2687 and urge the committee to pass it and move it to the full House for a floor vote.

Adoption is a deeply Christian act. God has adopted those who put their faith in him as sons and daughters. "See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called Children of God; and so we are," (1 John 3:1). Because of this, Paul writes, "So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God," (Galatians 4:7).

By adopting children in need into our families we demonstrate the love God showed to us and fulfill our divine mandate to "bring justice to the fatherless" (Isaiah 1:17) and to practice "religion that is pure and undefiled before God" by caring for orphans (James 1:27).

Adoption has been practiced by Christians since its beginning. The early Church preached against rampant infanticide, prohibited members from practicing it, and adopted babies which had been left to die by exposure by their pagan parents. The first orphanage in the United States was founded in 1727 by the Sisters of Saint Ursuline in New Orleans.

Christians continue to lead the adoption movement today. Bethany Christian Services is the largest faith-based agency, with 120 offices spread across 36 states providing domestic and international adoption, foster care, pregnancy counseling, and post-adoption support. Catholic Charities helps over 30,000 individuals every year with foster care, adoption placement, and other services. Perhaps the single most important contribution of these groups is their excellence at placing special needs or hard-to-place older children. About 45 percent of adoptions by Catholic Charities and 32 percent by Bethany Christian Services involve finding a forever family for these hard-to-place kids.

Tragically, several states have targeted faith-based agencies like these and forced them to close because they refused to violate sincere religious beliefs about God's design for the family. Simply put, these states have determined that coercing Christians to violate their consciences is more important than helping kids in need.

This must not be allowed to happen in Kansas.

The Adoption Protection Act puts the needs of children and birthmothers first. It codifies what has been practiced in Kansas for decades, ensuring that faith-based adoption providers will be allowed to

continue to help kids find forever families. The bill changes nothing for other agencies who will continue to be free to do their work according to their own values. HB 2687 maximizes options for children, birthmothers, and adoptive parents.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Brad Johnston
Topeka Reformed Presbyterian Church
Topeka, KS

Jeff Isaacs
Riverlawn Christian Church
Wichita, KS

Brandon Redic
The Bridge Church
Wichita, KS

Jennifer Brooks
St. Andrews Parish
Abilene, KS

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Topeka First Church of the Nazarene
Topeka, KS

John Marra
Living Hope Church of the Nazarene
Olathe, Kansas

Carson Johnson
Abilene Bible Baptist Church
Abilene, KS

Jonathan Foster
Mission Church
Lenexa, KS

Dan Newburg
Gardner Church of the Nazarene
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