



February 27, 2026

Central States Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America  
420 W. 14<sup>th</sup> St., Suite B  
Kansas City, MO 64105

Dear Members of the Kansas Legislature,

As bishop of the Central States Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, I oversee 154 congregations and ministries across Kansas and Missouri. The participants in those ministries represent the wide variety of individuals who live in the Heart of America, and I feel a special responsibility to each of them.

Some of my people are transgender, the actions of the Kansas Legislature over the past few weeks have hurt, demeaned, and targeted this already maligned and vulnerable population. These are precious children of God whom I love. Ultimately, the gospel of Jesus Christ is simply an invitation to love each other as God loves, and I write to tell you that in the passage and defense of SB 244, you have missed the mark in astonishing fashion. "Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you," God announced to the prophet Jeremiah, and through Jeremiah to each of us. You have taken persons God knows and loves and negated their very existence.

Every transgender person knows who they are much better than any outside observer (or DMV employee) ever will. For years, the state of Kansas allowed residents to change a gender marker if, after careful consideration, they knew it to be inaccurate. But because the political winds have shifted, members of your body decided to snatch that right away. The state then took the extraordinary measure of writing to some 1700 Kansans and telling them that their identity documents were immediately invalid. I hope you have been watching the anger and ridicule that is raining down upon our state from across the nation and the world because of this cruel and capricious action.

I write to express outrage and also to appeal to your sense of decency. Transgender Kansans are not political tokens to be used and discarded. They are human beings, beloved of God. Please do the right thing and rescind this legislation immediately, before any more harm is done to the citizens you have sworn to serve.

In hope for our future,

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**God's work. Our hands.**

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