

House Education Committee

February 13th, 2025

Bill: HB 250 – Public Employee Gender-Specific Language Requirements

Sponsor: Representative Nicholeen P. Peck

Floor Sponsor: Senator Daniel McCay

UASD Position: Tracking

This Bill prohibits certain employment action against a public employee.

Discussion: Representative Peck explained that this Bill was originally introduced last year by former Representative Jimenez, who participated in the presentation. She addressed amendment 2, which was adopted by the Committee. This amendment revised the language on lines 89–90, changing "biological gender" to "biological sex" and striking lines 102–104. Mr. Jimenez shared that previous constituents of his feared losing their jobs for misgendering a coworker or employee and they viewed being forced to use someone's preferred pronouns as an infringement on their free speech. This Bill aims to address this concern. Carlos Jimenez, presenting with the sponsor, mentioned past experiences with students requesting to be referred to by genders different from what was listed on their records. He found this to be problematic.

Representative Hayes referenced the 2015 Utah Compromise, which balanced employer and employee religious rights with protections against discrimination. She believed many of the concerns raised by the Bill were already addressed in current law. The sponsor responded that the 2015 law predated the increased use of pronoun preferences and gender-affirming language, and this Bill builds on that earlier work. Representative Hayes countered, noting that gender identity is already covered under the 2015 legislation. Utah Parents United, the Worldwide Organization for Women, and the Eagle Forum expressed support for the Bill. Equality Utah and several members of the public spoke in opposition. No further discussion ensued.

Yeas: 12

Nays: 1

N/V: 3

Outcome: HB 250, as amended, passed out of the Committee with a favorable recommendation.
