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ACLU of Kansas Statement on Potential Brownback Nomination

OVERLAND PARK, KS --- In response to President Trump's anticipated nomination of Governor Brownback as Ambassador for International Religious Freedom, ACLU of Kansas executive director Micah Kubic made the following statement:

"Today has been a dark day for the core American value of equality under the law. On the heels of President Trump's shameful attack on the military service of transgender Americans, it has been announced that Kansas Governor Sam Brownback will be nominated by the president as the Ambassador for International Religious Freedom. Given Gov. Brownback's record of steadfast opposition to equal rights for LGBT Americans—and his wrong-headed insistence that discrimination is justified by religious belief—the nomination should be considered a further indication of the Trump Administration's approach to equality.

The ACLU takes no position—either in support or opposition—on presidential nominations of any kind, including this one. However, we feel compelled to note that throughout his tumultuous tenure, Gov. Brownback worked tirelessly to erode the protections that the First Amendment affords for the separation of church and state. More troubling, Gov. Brownback has been one of the nation's leading proponents of the notion that people, businesses, and even governments should be able to discriminate against others because of their own religious beliefs. The governor went so far as to advocate for, and sign into law, a bill that mandates government funding of organizations that discriminate in their membership, so long as that discrimination is rooted in religious belief. In Gov. Brownback's view, "religious freedom" has meant issuing a license to discriminate against others, especially against LGBT Kansans. His policies on religious freedom have not been about protecting the constitutional right to worship when, where, how, and with whom you like; they have been about giving people the ability to pick and choose whether they will respect the fundamental human rights of their fellow citizens, based on their own particular religious views.

If Gov. Brownback is confirmed to the post, we look forward to working with current Lt. Gov. Colyer to advance and strengthen civil liberties in Kansas."