

**TO: Sen. Mike Thompson, Chair**  
**Senate State and Federal Affairs Committee**  
**RE: SB 446 – Written Testimony - Opponent**  
**FR: Connie Brown Collins**  
**Voter Rights Network of Wyandotte County**  
**DT: Feb. 6, 2024**

My name is Connie Brown Collins, Director/Founder of Voter Rights Network of Wyandotte County. I live in Wyandotte County, Kansas City, Kansas. Our organization hosts regular meetings on voting rights and other issues pertinent to underrepresented groups in WyCo and the state of Kansas. We represent a number of participating organizations and committed individuals, both from Wyandotte and Johnson Counties.

I strongly oppose SB 446, which bars "foreign nationals" from purchasing land larger than three acres in Kansas. Not only is this bill very broad and vague, it needs to clarify who it is seeking to prohibit buying land in our state. As written currently, the bill could have a negative impact on the rights of our immigrant neighbors seeking the American dream through farming and small business ownership. These immigrants include hard hard-working Hispanics, Latinos and others, who play a vital role in our economy, in our communities, and in all of our lives. They deserve the opportunity, like the immigrants who toiled to build this country, to strive for and live the American Dream.

Hispanics and other immigrants are the backbone of the Kansas and U.S. economies. As neighbors, business owners, taxpayers, and workers, immigrants are an integral part of Kansas' diverse and thriving communities and make extensive contributions that benefit all. A number of industries employ immigrants to keep this state and country afloat.

- **Construction** - The construction industry had the highest share of immigrant workers in 2022: an estimated 3.33 million, or 11.7% of all immigrant employment in the U.S. In Kansas, the construction industry relies on immigrants for 15% of its employees.
- **Services Sector** - The second-largest share of immigrant workers was in the services sector at 22.8% of all workers.
- **Meat Packing** - Meatpacking plants in Southwest Kansas account for 25% to 30% of the nation's beef. Our state's – and our country's economy – would crumble without the Hispanic and Latino workforce in Kansas, including those who do not yet have full citizenship.
- **Agriculture** – The majority (70%) of agricultural workers were foreign born. 78% of agricultural workers self-identify as Hispanic. The data is clear, Hispanics help feed America, and should not have to ask for government permission to legally buy property in Kansas.
- **Farming, Fishing & Forestry** is the sector with the highest concentration of Hispanic workers at 43.0%.
- **Food Service Industries** - While immigrants accounted for 17% of all civilian employed workers in the United States between 2017-2021, they played an outsized role in food production, making up 21% of workers in the U.S. food supply chain.
- **Hospitality** (especially Housekeeping) – Immigrants account for 31% of workers in the hotel and lodging industry.

**Government interference in property rights is not a Kansas value.** Kansans value freedom, liberty, and prosperity. Legislators should be cautious about our history of legislation prohibiting immigrants from owning land in the United States. Please ensure that any legislation barring Kansas and ownership does not encourage discrimination. Vote no on SB 446.

Respectfully submitted,

Connie Brown Collins  
Voter Rights Network of Wyandotte County