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February 12, 2018

Chairman Jennings and members of the Committee,

As a co-sponsor of this bi-partisan bill, I stand before you today to support HB 2551. The purpose of this bill is to prohibit the privatization of any correctional facility, adult or juvenile, in Kansas. This non-privatization is specific to the security/operations of correctional facilities and the staffing required to perform these operations. This bill will ensure that KDOC will continue to manage and operate all Kansas prisons.

The timing of this bill follows recent approval by the Legislative Finance Council for the construction of a new Lansing Correctional Facility. This committee has heard the presentation by Secretary of Corrections, Joe Norwood, outlining the details of the 20-year Lease/Build contract with Core Civic for the financing, construction, and maintenance of the new LCF prison. As it was never the intent of KDOC or Core Civic to privatize the security and operations of this new facility, upon construction completion, Core Civic will only be involved in managing the maintenance and maintenance staff.

There was a unanimous opinion by the Finance Council members to not allow any privatization of operations. They proposed and included language into the lease agreement that states it will not be privatized. This bill goes further, to include that all correctional facilities in the state be included in non-privatization. In collaboration with KDOC, this bill clarifies that the intent is not to prohibit the current or future programs and services that KDOC contracts out to the private sector, such as: medical/mental health, educational, food services, etc.

A companion bill, SB 328, unanimously passed through the Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee as amended last week.

I appreciate your consideration and passage of this bill.