

Chairman Tarwater and Members of the House Commerce & Labor Committee,

I am a Kansas State employee, Secretary of KOSE, and a Member Organizer; I am providing written testimony in opposition of HB 2586, which would impose government overreach on the citizens of Kansas.

I strongly oppose HB 2586 because it imposes more needless and unfair regulations on the workers of our state.

As a state worker I would like to remind the committee that Kansas has been a right to work state since the late 1950s. This makes it so that any worker who becomes a member is doing so knowing that it is completely voluntary and actively join and pay dues. The only goal of this bill is to put an undue burden on state workers who wish to be Union members.

As a member organizer allow me to convey what hundreds of state employees across our state have said are their primary concerns: low pay, high turnover, expensive health insurance, under staffing, and lack of proper training. Those are what are predominately the common factors I have heard knocking on individual doors and speaking with state workers. Others more specific to their agency/worksites are as follows: Larned State Hospital – 70% of the Licensed Practical Nurses jobs are vacant, forced overtime so much that FOUR STATE WORKERS have committed suicide, DCF – social worker positions have high turnover due to high caseloads and pressure to get them completed when there are not enough of them, Ottawa is needing help from other offices to get cases closed they are so low on staff, KDOT – safe practices are sometimes being ignored and when an employee follows the policies of the agency he/she is punished, roads in areas are in terrible shape, equipment in some shops is outdated or they have to share with other shops so work is slower to complete, KDOC – Lansing is currently understaffed however when the private prison goes online there are proposed layoffs that most likely will impact security staff as well further jeopardizing any measure of safety. Some of our positions across the state are 20% below market rate for their job.

These are the real issues facing Kansas workers. As elected members of the legislature it is your job and your duty to represent the needs and wishes of those you represent. I have not heard from anyone, State worker or otherwise, who has mentioned anything that is mentioned in this bill. It is time to stop using the limited resources of our state on these time and money wasting bills and start using them to alleviate the real issues of our state.

Neil Diediker