

To Chairman Kerschen, Vice Chairman Estes, and members of the Senate Agriculture Committee,

My Name is Blake Williams

I am here in opposition to SB300. For 8 years my wife and I operated a raw milk micro dairy here in Kansas. During that time our 11 healthy children drank no milk other than what we produced on our little acreage. We also sold raw milk to dozens of families who were willing to travel many miles and expend great effort to be able to have the raw milk that we produced.

The people who bought our milk did so for many reasons. Some were lactose intolerant and though they could not drink pasteurized milk, they could drink raw milk. Others simply knew that, when properly handled, raw milk is healthier than pasteurized milk because the pasteurization process, while it will kill any harmful bacteria present, also kills beneficial bacteria, which are referred to as probiotics. Pasteurization also breaks down or alters healthy enzymes, fats, proteins, and vitamins that are in raw milk.

Many people say that raw milk is dangerous and that since the advent of pasteurization many lives have been saved. Correlation is not causation. It was the advent of germ theory, the understanding that many illnesses that afflict human beings are caused by tiny microscopic organisms, that led to the adoption of pasteurization in the late 1800 and early 1900's. It was also the advent of germ theory that led to a greater understanding of the importance of sanitation and animal health in the dairy industry and the food industry at large. Modern sanitation and refrigeration techniques have made raw milk safe without having to resort to pasteurization, which, as previously stated, has many undesirable unintended consequences. You don't have to take my word for it, there are 13 states that allow for the sale of raw milk **in stores**. This is all the proof you need to know that, thanks to modern sanitation and refrigeration, it is not necessary to pasteurize milk. Without a doubt pasteurization has its place in the dairy industry, but pasteurized milk is not for everyone. For those who, for whatever reason, decide that raw milk is the best choice for them, raw milk is not only a healthy option, there are lots of studies that indicate that it is, in fact, the healthier option, all things considered.

I acknowledge that people who are "pro-pasteurization" and people who are "pro-raw milk" can go tit for tat, back and forth, citing this scientific study and that scientific study to support their position. That this is so raises a larger philosophical question. Who really gets to decide? If the state of Kansas makes it illegal to sell raw milk, then it follows that a farmer who sells raw milk could be arrested for doing so. For almost 250 years the United States of America has prided itself on being the freest nation on earth, "the land of the free and the home of the brave," as our national anthem so aptly expresses it. We are also taught to respect our military veterans on the grounds that they risk their lives to defend our freedoms. If the state of Kansas outlaws the sale of raw milk, it is entirely within the realm of possibility that a young soldier from Kansas could be off in the field of battle fighting to protect our freedoms, while simultaneously, his father is being arrested for nothing more than having milked a cow and sold that milk to his neighbor down the road. Is such a scenario not troubling? Are we not kidding ourselves to consider ourselves free when our government possesses the authority to meddle in the most ordinary affairs of citizens. When a simple agrarian transaction like a farmer selling milk to his neighbor is subject to government oversight and even prosecution? It seems to me that if SB300 is passed and becomes law, that it may still make sense to refer to our country as the "home of the brave," but perhaps we should think twice before we proudly exclaim "land of

the free.”

Finally, I would like to make just one quick point about SB300 as it pertains to eminent domain. I realize that legislation like SB300 does not, strictly speaking, fall under the purview of eminent domain because no ones property is being seized. However, SB300 clearly would have ramifications consistent with the legal spirit and principles upon which eminent domain is based. All over the state of Kansas there are tiny dairies milking just a handful of cows and selling the raw milk to friends, neighbors, and others in their communities. If, God forbid, SB300 became law, these little dairies would not simply switch over and start pasteurizing their milk. At that point the product that they offer is no longer distinguishable from the milk being offered in grocery stores. These little dairies, with just a few cows each, have absolutely no way of competing with the huge factory dairies that milk thousands of cows per day. Nevertheless, these small farmers will have spent hard earned money on land, fencing, milking equipment, chilling equipment, etc. Just as proponents of various types of gun bans recognize the need for “gun buy backs” should they make illegal a gun which was previously legal, so too, SB300 would make a certain type of farming, on a certain scale, illegal, and so should allocate the financial resources necessary to compensate those who, on the stroke of midnight, on the day the law were to go into effect, would be deprived of not only of their current and future income, but also, many of the things which they own, will, for all intents and purposes, become worthless.

Please, don't let SB300 move beyond this committee to the full legislature.

Thank you.
Blake Williams