

**Testimony on HB 2353 relating to the Semiquincentennial Commission  
To  
The House Committee on Appropriations**

**By Brad Loveless  
Secretary  
Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks, and Tourism**

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HB 2353 seeks to create the Semiquincentennial Commission. **The Department is neutral on the provisions contained in the bill.** The provisions of the bill would be effective upon publication in the statute book.

The bill creates the Kansas Commission for the United States semiquincentennial within the Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism to plan, encourage, develop and coordinate the 250<sup>th</sup> founding of the United States. The commission would consist of 14 voting members, including the Secretary of KDWPT or the Secretary's designee, among others. The Commission is to plan, coordinate, and implement a program in 2026 to commemorate the semiquincentennial by considering private, local, state and federal plans and programs, hold public meetings to solicit input of Kansas citizens through the state, and to create a website to communicate the plans. Meetings of the Commission shall be held throughout the state and the first meeting shall be called by the Secretary. The first public meeting shall be held withing 90 days of the first meeting of the Commission.

On or before December 31, 2022, the Commission is required to submit a comprehensive report to the Governor, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House with a detailed timeline of the plan for the overall program, the recommendation for allocation of costs among public and private entities, the projected number of jobs created through the program, the projected economic impact of the implementation of the plan, the geographic impact of the plan and outputs and outcomes against which progress and success can be measured. Each year thereafter, the Commission shall submit an annual report to the same parties and publish on the website the plan and annual reports.

The Commission may accept, use, and dispose of gifts and donations, a list of which shall be submitted to the Kansas Ethics Commission and published on the website. A semiquincentennial fund would be created and administered by the KDWPT. At the conclusion of the project, December 31, 2027, the Commission would be abolished.

The agency would like to address a concern with regard to the operation of the Commission. It does not appear that the Commission and the mandated activities are funded in any way other than gifts and donations. There will be costs associated with holding public meetings throughout the state, building a website to house information and update the public, and generate a report and annual updates. The Department is mainly fee funded and those funds have restrictions on use and cannot be used to support this project on the wildlife and

parks sides of the agency. The agency would require some other funds to operate this program at least until the newly created fund could support the required expenditures.

**The Department appreciates the opportunity to address the Committee on the bill.**