
TESTIMONY

Written In Opposition of HB 2318

House Taxation Committee

By Andy Sanchez, Executive Secretary-Treasurer, KS AFL-CIO

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Thank you Chairman Smith and members of the Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to share our Opposition on this important issue that could only mean the loss of jobs for the men and women of Kansas. We urge lawmakers to stay the course to fix our roads and bridges, invest in our infrastructure and invest in the people of Kansas. Now is not the time to weaken our economy. Often transportation jobs are the lifeline for many Kansas families. Creating good, better paying, family sustaining jobs should remain a priority for our state.

It was only a short time ago cuts to the transportation program forced many Kansans to take their craft to other states. HB 2318 would do the same with an estimated loss of \$300 Million dollars to highway funding projects. We all wanted our federal government to step up and lead on infrastructure, and well, they have. Now, as a state we must do our part.

The Kansas AFL-CIO is based on the principles of the hopes and aspirations of the working people of Kansas and the country. Our organization, some 75,000 members across the state are eager to work with government and management at every instance to promote economic development. The working families of our affiliates put a great deal of value on productivity and what helps the bottom line in any given trade. Workers can be great partners to that end. We should do everything we can to provide support when there is this kind of strong public and private partnership. Especially as we know that our work on infrastructure has barely begun.

Building Trade Crafts of the AFL-CIO that are prevalent in highway construction are Laborers, Operating Engineers, Carpenters and Iron Workers, where apprenticeships are managed by both labor and management. Training and skills are the priority in this partnership and both management and labor recognize the importance of this in the competitive labor market of construction. Forty percent of

Americans don't have \$400 in the bank for an emergency and that should be concerning to us all. We say that this is good job creation because we see that it raises the standard of living for middle-class working people. These are the types of jobs that lift people up, provide more opportunities long-term, for women and people of color.

I have observed that more than ever, people want accountability for their investment. At all levels of government much scrutiny is given to whether investments for economic development live up to that investment. We know that the investment in Transportation projects does live up to the investment return and contributes to strategic planning for the future of our state. The positive impact of the past two ten-year transportation programs cannot be ignored. If there's work to be done, we must keep skilled trades and expertise like this working at home, as we know that this pays dividends for the government of the State of Kansas, and our economy. While we do support the quest for a zero tax on food at the grocery store, we are unable to support a job killing tax bill such as HB 2318.

For years, construction trades in Transportation were in the top industries reporting statewide job losses. Kansas businesses missed out because of the job loss and cuts to the highway program. Only recently have we turned that around. The numerous skilled crafts mentioned above spend and are taxed, making them great contributors to our local economy, but that only occurs if they are here. We ask that you oppose HB 2318 and stay the course to help regain the pride in our state highway program and resume doing our due diligence on infrastructure. It will pay off in the long run. Thank you.