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SENATE CHAMBER

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

CHAIR: NATURAL RESOURCES
 MEMBER: AGRICULTURE
 FEDERAL AND STATE AFFAIRS
 LOCAL GOVERNMENT
 REAPPORTIONMENT
 JOINT COMMITTEE ON
 ADMINISTRATIVE RULES
 AND REGULATIONS

Testimony on SB 356 – Amusement Ride Regulation

In opposition

To Senate Federal & State Affairs Committee
 By Senator Ralph Ostmeyer, District 40
 March 14, 2012

Many of our Northwest Kansas communities have home-owned carnivals. These organizations have been developed over the years, out of both the need for a carnival at county fairs and community events but mostly out of community pride. These carnivals are non-profit organizations that have a variety of small and large rides catering to our small rural communities. These rides are maintained and operated by volunteers, and these communities have worked very hard to keep them going from year to year. The workforce has always been dedicated local residents donating their time in maintaining and operating these carnivals. They are very proud of their excellent track records of safe and injury-free operations

It is my understanding that our home-owned carnivals were developed over the years because big name carnivals were not dependable. There was a clause in their contracts stating that if they received better offers, they didn't have to honor their obligation to our small communities. After this disappointment, the communities began investing in a carnival of their own. These carnivals are good for our small communities, and the pride that goes into pulling these events off each year is very evident. Our rural communities work together and allow people to spend money locally and keep it invested right at home.

There is no question that the volunteers have a vested interest in keeping the rides maintained and in safe operating condition. Many of our operators have 20-30 years of experience operating the rides. Our home-owned carnivals provide a safe environment, and I am aware of the accident in Norton County. That should not necessitate any changes to our present mode of operation.

Senate Bill 356 will basically take away exemptions for regulations that require a burden on the volunteers, who are equally as qualified as the inspector(s) who would train them. Our home-owned carnivals have always taken every possible measure to insure safety for our communities.

The biggest obstacle will be getting the Kansas Department of Labor to understand that these carnivals will not open more than just at county fairs and special community events. This legislation is very important to our rural communities. I have witnessed the pride and hard work that goes into these annual events. It is important that we protect the rural community way of life that so many family members look forward to every year. I have heard from many of my constituents concerning this issue.

Sn Fed & State
 Attachment 5

3-14-12