

**Testimony before Senate Commerce
House Bill- 2023 Paycheck Protection
Presented by Eric Stafford, Senior Director of Government Affairs**



Wednesday, February 6, 2013

Madam Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Eric Stafford, Senior Director of Government Affairs with the Kansas Chamber of Commerce. The Kansas Chamber is pleased to support House Bill 2023 which prohibits public sector unions from using dues income for political purposes.

The exponential growth of public sector unions is putting taxpayers at risk. Private sector unions bargain over profits while public sector unions bargain over tax dollars. There is no competition in the public sector to control wages like competing businesses in the private sector. This has led to unsustainable agreements between municipalities, counties and states which have been exposed after the 2008 downturn. Government unions typically enjoy above-market compensation through better health benefits, pensions, job security and earlier retirement than private sector workers.

Paycheck protection laws simply give workers a choice whether or not to contribute their money toward union political activity. If public sector unions in Kansas are actually pursuing an agenda desired by their membership, they should have nothing to fear. Under HB 2023, if an employee wants to support the political activity of their organization, they can simply write a check.

Private sector unionization levels peaked at 37% in 1952, compared to roughly 6% today. Unions saw government employees as potential dues-paying members, something unions once rejected. Since they realized the potential, public sector unionization rates have remained high- around 43% for local-level workers and 33% for state employees. Public sector membership now makes up the majority of all union membership nationwide.

In conclusion, this issue comes down to the question of the role of government in the solicitation of support for public sector unions. Should the government be endorsing or opposing public sector unions? We feel that decision is best left to the individual. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak to you today in support of HB 2023. I'll be happy to answer any questions.



The Kansas Chamber, with headquarters in Topeka, is the leading statewide pro-business advocacy group moving Kansas towards becoming the best state in America to do business. The Chamber represents small, medium and large employers all across Kansas.