

TESTIMONY
In Support of SB 179
Before the Senate Commerce Committee
By Andy Sanchez, Executive Secretary-Treasurer, KS AFL-CIO
February 26, 2013

Chairwoman Lynn and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to be here today and speak in support of SB 179. The bill before you today is a great opportunity to see that Kansans get put to work where state funding is utilized in the procurement of a project.

It only makes sense that every public contract and sub-contract authorized by the state funding should inherently include an attempt to include local workers of the state. The benefits extend well beyond construction workers, but with construction alone the payoff is extensive. First, to sum the work up as building a new structure or road does not begin to demonstrate the extent of a project. But, a threshold in the bill does offer a \$100,000 parameter. Public improvements may involve construction, reconstruction, demolition, alteration, repair work or maintenance performed on state property or premises.

Second, construction involves tradesman and crafts well beyond our wildest dreams including laborers, carpenters, bricklayers, plumbers, electricians, ironworkers, sheet-metal workers, heavy equipment operators, concrete finishers, drywall finishers, painters, heating and air techs, insulators and much more, all of which we have trained or are in training residing right here in the state. Our affiliated trades through a network of labor-management apprenticeship training programs enables workers to gain skills they need to get good middle-class jobs. It is a concept we believe so much in that joint-labor management programs spend nationally approximately \$800 million a year on private apprenticeship training, 1,700 training facilities and about 10,000 certified training instructors. We believe we should do what we can to keep experienced and specialized skills here in the state and keep them at their most productive level.

Last, there are just too many forces that are undermining the economy's ability to generate good jobs here at home. But, this bill is something within our control and it could be the "shot in the arm" our economy needs. At the least, it does mean job opportunities for our own citizens. You well know that the State's investment can be extensive in the types of public improvements mentioned above. In my testimony, I just wanted to share a handful of the occupations that must search for work when work is slowed here locally. These are family supporting middle-class jobs. Our state and local communities benefit when they work at home because these workers feel and ARE more secure to spend and borrow. SB 179 is an opportunity to keep Kansans in Kansas. Please give SB 179 your favorable consideration. Thank you.