

March 12, 2018

RE: Written Testimony in SUPPORT of SB263

Chairman, a member of the committee, my name is Christopher Brunin and I am submitting this written testimony in support of SB263.

As someone who grew up on a Kansas farm, and the great grandson of agriculture professional I see a huge potential for future agricultural growth in the sunflower state. The farmers are the backbone of Kansas, and we need to keep agriculture thriving in order to keep our state strong. If a farm is lucrative and the farmer is successful then the state's economy will reflect that success. As someone who will one day inherit a farm, I want the crops that are grown on my farm to benefit the people of Kansas. I don't want my family members and neighbors to stress about not having the money to afford the input costs it takes to grow crops like corns and soybeans. The farmers extend themselves on credit, and get paid annually with a high amount of risk in between harvests. The margins in these traditional markets are leaving the farmer with a small net profit making it harder to survive year after year. Kansas farmers are very proud people and some have had land in their family for generations. They are loyal to our state and I think it's time for them to gain more equity in the agricultural industry. With industrial hemp the farmers will have the opportunity to produce multiple yields per year, and that leads to higher profits. I don't like the federal government subsidizing the farmers to grow crops like corn when we have an alternative crop like industrial hemp that can make farmers much more money. Mono-cropping corn and soybeans can be lucrative on a large scale, but what about the small farmers? We have to ask ourselves, are the Kansans getting anything in return? Are the farmers helping their local communities with the crops that are grown? Are large numbers of jobs in Kansas being created because of the current crops being produced? As a kid we never ate the crops we grew on an industrial farming scale. With industrial hemp we can produce local food that can be consumed by every Kansan as well. I one day soon want to manage a farm in a state where I have the liberty and freedom to grow a crop to increase the quality of the land, and the people surrounding it.

I went to college in Kansas, and received a degree in business. I am an entrepreneur who wants the freedom to create a brand and products for a better future for my family and me. With industrial hemp and the potential 50,000 products that can be made I see a bright future as a farm and business owner. I see a potential great success for major industrial development in Kansas. We are in a great place geographically to be the front-runner in

this industry. We don't need to waste a bunch of time researching industrial hemp. We need to get farmers involved and start grow this low water using plant. We have the ability to be the main central distribution hub of the hemp industry in the United States of America. The caves in Lenexa seem like a good place to store and transport the products from. Kansas has one of the best climates to grow hemp, and the wild hemp grows very well in this state without receiving any nurturing. In 1863 Kansas led the nation in bushels per acre of hemp. It has already worked let's not drag our feet on this. We need to pass a bill similar to HB2182 allowing farmers to grow it. When we look at this from a global standpoint, and then we can see that we are the only major industrial nation who doesn't grow industrial hemp. I can go down to the local grocery store, and buy multiple items made with hemp. It is really unjust that I can buy lotion, shampoo, milk, bread, and cereal made of industrial hemp, but it's illegal for my family to grow it. The sky is limit on the potential for Kansas's farmers, and our states industrial production. We are talking about a multi-billion dollar industry as it stands right now, and other countries farmers and processors are making all of the profits. I would like to be able to return home to the farm to carry on my family's dreams, and have the money I make be a representation of how hard I work, and the products I produce. I don't want to be held to what the market says minus the high input costs of farming soybeans. We are in a tough place as a state and a lot of famers are hurting. I have a feeling with the reduction in small farms across the nation over the years that if the famers don't have an alternative crop to grow they will have to sell their land off to larger farms due to the lack of financial vitality.

The best thing we can do is help create an industry that will help Kansans thrive in this booming market. This isn't anything new to our country, and when you look through the pages of history some of the greatest Americans grew hemp. George Washington our first president is known for his pro hemp-farming stance. We as farmers will use less water with little to no pesticide use. What that means is less input costs for the farmer which leads to higher profits. The quality of the land will be restored and improved with richer nutrients to grow the traditional crops if desired. Through phytoremediation, industrial hemp can basically remove pollutants from the soil and concentrate the toxins in plant cells. The plant goes unharmed so it can still be used, and the soil is cleaned. We have to understand politics needs to be put to the side in order to put the Kansas famers first. We can transform local factories into hemp paper mills, clothing mills, food processing plants, biofuel plants, and many more. We need jobs in Kansas, and we need the people that have left in recent years to return to obtain these jobs in a very promising industry. Our last governor had stated that he wants Kansas to be the state of renewables and that we have a huge potential in agricultural exports. I share these views and I believe with industrial hemp we will have the opportunity to be that renewable state, and have a new base commodity that could increase our exports exponentially. If we add a couple of new dairy factories that isn't going to increase the exports to the level desired by the current

administration. The benefits Kansas's farmers will see are endless, and the transformation needed on an agricultural level can start right here in Kansas. Farmers will have the right to decide if they want to take it a step further to process the crops they grow, and then make it into an end product that they can sell on the free market however they desire. We should want to give our farmers every option possible. If they want to sell industrial hemp seed by the pound to a COOP, or sell the whole plant for extraction for biofuel that should be their choice.

We have the opportunity to be the first movers of our nation in this industry. Yes, in Kentucky and a few other states can grow industrial hemp, but they don't have the climate, available acreage, or soil that Kansas does. We can't afford to wait and see all of the other states prosper from this alternative crop. All we have to do is look at history, science, global markets, and take a look at the products available for the American consumer. The Kansas farmers are not getting a fair chance to compete with the rest of the world in this industry. Imagine Kansas's hemp paper and plastic products for sale across the world. Imagine an industrial hemp biofuel more profitable than ethanol that's made from corn. Imagine a building material more durable than steel, and being waterproof. We can make this a reality and Kansas's farmers will have the ability to create brands, and products that will be sustainable and lucrative. We won't need to depend on foreign oil, paper, or building material sources anymore. We can create a lucrative agricultural industry in this state that supports business growth by passing legislation to legalize industrial hemp, and educating the farmers on the opportunity costs at stake. I have talked with other farm owners in Kansas and a large majority of them that are familiar with industrial hemp do support it. Due to the current legal status they don't have any interest in growing it. If the laws were changed, and this bill passes I know our farmers will be ready to take this industry to the next level that other states have failed to achieve.

I want to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to submit my written testimony in support of SB263 and ask that this committee pass SB263 favorably, and I would like to add that Kansas is always going to be home for me. I think this is the best state in the country and I want my future farm to be planted with a sustainable alternative crop, and have the ability to make a prosperous living growing industrial hemp. If you have any questions or want to talk to me personally my contact info is below and please do not hesitate to contact me.

Christopher Brunin  
cbrunin15@yahoo.com  
785-506-1997