



**AMERICANS FOR
PROSPERITY®**

KANSAS

March 14, 2017

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 209

Chairman Olson and members of the committee:

On behalf of over 50,000 Americans for Prosperity activists in Kansas, I am here today speaking in support of Senate Bill 209 which promotes transparency in electric bills by requiring utilities to provide customers greater information and transparency on their electric utility bill. Currently, Kansans receive very little information on their monthly electric bills. They get little more than a single rate and a total for how much money they owe the utility. Over the last few years, there have been numerous rate hikes driving up the monthly bills that Kansans must pay to keep the lights on. Without greater billing transparency and information about electricity costs, Kansans have no way of knowing who should be held accountable.

Since 2009, Westar has increased rates 25 times raising the average household's electricity bill by 60%. The flurry of rate increases combined with little information on a customer's monthly bill makes it difficult for Kansans to know who to hold accountable. Is the utility company building wasteful projects or irresponsibly running up administrative costs? Or is it bad state or federal policy that is driving up costs? These are just a couple of possibilities and the reality is far more complex making it difficult for the average citizen to engage their utility or elected officials.

SB 209 gives Kansans additional information by requiring electric utilities to separate the charges in a process known as unbundling. If SB 209 passes, utilities would list out separate charges for generation and transmission of electricity, environmental upgrades, renewable energy, decommissioning of plants, and administrative costs among other things. While some of this information may currently be available in ratemaking documents on the Kansas Corporation Commission's website, putting it on a customer's bill greatly increases accessibility. There is not true transparency if the information is spread across dozens of confusing documents. Many other states already have unbundled billing meaning Kansans are behind the curve and likely paying more than they should have to pay for electricity.

Kansans will know who to hold accountable for rate increases with greater information on the various charges resulting in the sum on their electric bill. If administrative costs rise quickly, Kansas can ask the utility to justify the costs. Or, it could be that mandated environmental upgrades are increasing consumer costs and Kansans could contact their federal representatives and ask for appropriate reforms. With just a single charge as it is today, the response of customers may be directed in the wrong direction.

Americans for Prosperity supports Senate Bill 209 as it promotes transparency by giving Kansans greater information about their electric bills. With greater information, Kansans can hold the right party responsible and halt unnecessary rate increases.

Jeff Glendening
State Director
Americans for Prosperity-Kansas

Americans for Prosperity (AFP) exists to recruit, educate, and mobilize citizens in support of the policies and goals of a free society at the local, state, and federal level, helping every American live their dream – especially the least fortunate. AFP has more than 3.2 million activists across the nation, a local infrastructure that includes 35 state chapters, and has received financial support from more than 100,000 Americans in all 50 states. For more information, visit www.AmericansForProsperity.org.