



KANSAS NATIONAL EDUCATION ASSOCIATION / 715 SW 10TH AVENUE / TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612-1686

Terry Forsyth, Testimony
SB 175
Senate Commerce Committee
Monday, March 18, 2019

Madam Chair and members of the committee. I am Terry Forsyth and I am representing the Kansas National Education Association in opposing SB 175.

SB 175 would authorize public employees to immediately cease the withholding of employee organization dues from their wages at any time once a written or email request is submitted to their public employer. Once the public employer receives the request, the public employer must immediately provide a written or email notification to the employee organization and cease withholding dues from the employee's wages. As you are aware, Janus found agency fees in the public sector unconstitutional. Since Kansas was already a right to work state, the decision had no impact on public sector contracts or rules related to maintenance of membership.

The Kansas National Education Association opposes SB 175 as unnecessary government interference in a labor organizations ability to manage their membership practices, while leaving other membership organizations and companies free to engage in the same practices. The true purpose of this bill is not to protect workers or the interests of these public employees, but to weaken their collective voice.

SB 175 is unnecessary. Union members choose whether to join the union, set their own dues, elect their own leaders, and vote on how and where their money will be spent. As a right to work state, all union membership is completely voluntary in Kansas. No employee can pay union dues, fees, or assessments without proactively approaching the union and signing a card expressing interest. No one is coerced or forced to join. Moreover, an employee can always drop their membership in a timely fashion, or organize fellow employees to decertify the union, if they become dissatisfied with the union.

SB 175 is unfair. Proscribed drop periods and automatic renewals are something that charities and membership organizations use all the time for member convenience. For example, donors can make their yearly contribution to the United Way auto renewable. Consumer contracts, longer and with smaller print than a union membership card, utilize auto renewal and drop periods in a number of contexts.

Our community depends on its workers. That includes the KNEA members who teach and care for our children, who provide public services that keep our communities safe and vibrant, and who treat our families when we are sick or injured. Instead of attacking hard-pressed working families, our legislature should focus on bringing back lost jobs and restoring an economy that works for all Kansans—not just a few. We call on you to stop the distractions and divisions—and invest in Kansas again.

We stand in opposition of SB 175 and appreciate your consideration of our testimony.