

Karin Brownlee, Secretary

Sam Brownback, Governor

To: Senate Committee on Commerce  
From: Kathie Sparks, Deputy Secretary of Labor  
Date: February 15, 2012  
Re: SB 416

Thank you Chairperson Wagle, for allowing the Department of Labor to appear today in support of SB416. Senate Bill 416 would transfer the administration of the State Workplace Health and Safety Program from the Department of Health and Environment to the Department of Labor, and transfer the administration of the State's Workers Compensation Self Insurance Fund to the Secretary of Health and Environment where it currently is located. The Department supports both of these objectives.

#### **State Workplace Health and Safety Program**

Historically this transfer of authority codifies the fact that the Kansas Department of Labor (KDOL) has under contract, first with the Kansas Department of Administration; Kansas Health Policy Authority, and most recently with the Department of Health and Environment, administered the State Workplace Health and Safety Program.

The administration of this program by the KDOL is an example of the best use of assets that are already in place. The Industrial Safety and Health (IS&H) Division of KDOL is the agency responsible for all industrial safety and health issues and programs in the public sector throughout the State of Kansas, including the State of Kansas as a public employer. As the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is to the private sector, IS&H is to the public sector in Kansas. Consequently the division has accumulated a wealth of expertise and experience relating to the health and safety of Kansas workers. In addition, KDOL in cooperation with OSHA has participated in the consultation program in which by invitation, KDOL inspectors will visit worksites to advise on compliance with OSHA safety and health standards.

In addition, KDOL is also responsible for administering the workers compensation laws within the state of Kansas, and this has contributed to the department's expertise in the area of workplace health and safety.

Transfer of the authority would also allow the Secretary of Labor rules and regulation authority which was not available when the department provided services by contract. Having both the responsibility and the authority will assist in assuring that regulations are current with policies and procedures without duplication of effort.

Transfer of responsibilities would be accomplished with minimal disruption and costs. KDOL would assume responsibility for records keeping, and staff necessary for the administration of the program

Senate Commerce Committee  
Date: February 15, 2012

Attachment 1

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Pat George, Secretary

Department of Commerce

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**Testimony to  
The Senate Commerce Committee  
by Secretary Pat George  
Kansas Department of Commerce  
February 15, 2012**

This bill is technical cleanup necessitated by the substantive changes made last year in transitioning the former Kansas Inc. duties and responsibilities to the Secretary of Commerce.

The Department of Commerce is pleased to offer support for Senate Bill 417 which effectively strikes reference to Kansas Inc. and inserts the secretary of commerce in certain roles and responsibilities formerly held by Kansas Inc. Furthermore, the Department of Commerce is already serving in the capacity of many of the functions that Kansas Inc. once performed, and as the state's lead economic development agency is in a position to advise the governor and legislature on economic development issues and coordinate with stakeholders on strategic matters. The Secretary of Commerce urges passage of this bill.

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Attachment 2