



**Testimony on Senate Bill 399**  
**Kansas workers & community partnership act, undocumented aliens.**

**Terry Forsyth, President**  
**Working Kansas Alliance**

Chairman Brungardt and member of the Committee,

Working Kansas Alliance opposes Senate Bill 399. Our preferred means of addressing immigration would be through comprehensive immigration reform instead of state-specific laws designed without consideration for many of the basic rights of native-born and undocumented workers.

While other proposals purporting to address immigration are designed to make life in Kansas unbearable for undocumented workers and those certainly fail to seriously address this issue, we are concerned that this legislation is simply designed to give employers enough security to keep labor cheap and workplace standards to a minimum.

This bill only furthers the myth that undocumented workers do the work that Kansans don't want to do. Kansans expect to be reasonably compensated for the work they do. When a worker is undocumented their labor can be grossly underpaid and there is no recourse for this action. While Senate Bill 399 addresses documentation, it does nothing to ensure that wages are any more fair than they are today.

Secondly, linking immigration status to employment without the benefit of representation means the workers are at the will of that employer. Their personal lives are now directly tied to that employer. This approaches indentured servitude and termination puts at risk not only the worker's future but his or her family's future as well. It is no way to build a stable life.

As written this legislation further perpetuates Kansas' race to the bottom. Working Kansas Alliance stands with all workers in Kansas and their right to a decent wage, to basic protections as employees and to safe working conditions.

We commend the coalition behind this bill for approaching immigration in a serious manner that is a dramatic and welcome departure from other proposals this Legislature has considered.

However any changes short of Federal comprehensive immigration reform ought to bolster the middle class. This bill does nothing to strengthen the rights of workers - undocumented or not. It seeks only to marginally improve the climate for businesses to continue hiring the workers they already hire. The fact that it does so without forcing police officers and sheriff deputies to harass someone because of how he or she looks is an improvement but not in and of itself enough.