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Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee

Written Testimony for Senate Bill 356

Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to testify before the committee on Senate Bill 356 – the Home Owned Carnival bill. I am very familiar with home owned carnivals. I was one of the five original planners and developers of the Cheyenne County Home Owned Carnival over twenty five years ago. I have attended carnivals in many other Northwest Kansas Communities.

The home owned carnivals were all developed to involve their communities in a safe, fun activity at the County Fair. For many years outside carnivals were hired to come to our community. We found that they presented too many problems and for a few years there were no rides or games at our fair.

That is when we developed our own. The first year we purchased two rides and planned for ten booths of activities ranging from basketball games to a duck pond. They were all staffed by our community members. The rides themselves were completely torn down, refurbished by our mechanics, tested, retested, and pronounced safe for our patrons. We acquired insurance for the not only the rides but for all the patrons attending our carnival. The original insurers sent an inspector who deemed our rides safe for the public. In twenty five years we have never had one claim.

We continue to have insurance and would be willing to post it, if needed. We will certainly send a copy of it to the Department of Labor.

Home Owned Points:

The average home owned carnival runs for four nights and the rides are operated for twenty to twenty five hours a year.

We now have six rides and there are procedures before, during, and after the fair to insure the utmost safety. The concern for safety is always there.

The ride operators are all volunteers from our community. Before they are permitted to operate a ride they are given detailed instructions on the safety procedures for that ride. We have two rides where a child has to be of a certain height to ride – there is never an exception.

These are not for profit carnivals. Most rides are twenty five cents. The ferris wheel is fifty cents. For a ten dollar bill our kids can ride the rides all evening. All profits made are used for the upkeep of our rides or in a fund to purchase a new ride.

Our carnivals, at fair time, are a source of community pride and an event that we all look forward to each summer. These are our children – their safety has been our concern since the beginning. We feel that any more restrictions, other than proof of insurance, would be unfair, and any more added cost could completely change the opportunity we have to provide inexpensive, family fun at our fair.

There is not a traffic light in Cheyenne County – we have had accidents and were not required to put up red lights. We have never had an accident at our fair. To our knowledge there has only been one accident at a Home Owned Carnival. Quite a record – I would say.

Thank you for considering this testimony.

Ward Cassidy 120th