



Testimony before the
House Appropriations Committee
On
House Bill 2384
By
Mike Marvin, Executive Director
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Chairman Rhoades and Members of the Committee:

My name is Mike Marvin, and I am the Executive Director of the Kansas Organization of State Employees (KOSE), which represents the working men and women who are executive branch employees and on whose behalf I am privileged to appear today. I thank you for the opportunity to speak with you about HB 2384.

HB 2384 appears to advance a misguided solution in search of a non-existent problem. If enacted into law, HB 2384 has the potential to negatively impact our state in a whole host of unsettling ways ranging from the ability to attract, train and maintain the best possible professional state government work force, to taxpayers suffering decreases in quality public services, to political cronyism influencing hiring decisions.

This bill also proposes to upend almost a century's worth of civil service tradition in the Sunflower State. In 1915, Kansas was the 9th state to adopt a general civil service system. The system evolved over time and eventually a Constitutional Amendment adopted by the voters of Kansas in 1940 set the stage for the system we have in place today. That civil service system was conceived decades ago because the policymakers and citizens who came before us understood even back then that in order to ensure quality public services an adequately trained, professional and experienced state workforce was essential. Over the years, the civil service system has met the needs of Kansas and its citizens. It still continues to meet those needs today. While some are advocating that HB 2384 is needed to help provide flexibility, creativity and reward performance to better serve Kansas, the reality is those goals already exist within the current system. In fact, those goals can be found in Memorandum of Agreements that are already in existence today.

If enacted into law, HB 2384 would not only have Kansas turn its back on its long tradition of civil service, but would also put state government and taxpayers alike at risk. First and foremost, hiring decisions would be completely out of the state's hands and therefore could undermine the

professionalism and quality that our citizens and taxpayers expect. The potential for large groups of state workers to be terminated and replaced with every administration change would not only disrupt the continuity of public services but also negatively impact our economy at both the state and local levels. Think of the cloud of uncertainty that could emerge over communities who have large numbers of state employees ranging from big cities like Topeka, to smaller communities, like Larned or Osawatomie, who have a state institution that basically drives a large part of the local economy.

What will HB 2384 do to help attract the quality workforce that is needed for the 21st century? Why would anyone want to go to work for a business that could see a change in management every four years and potentially put their livelihood at risk? How do we attract employees to work in critical positions with that kind of potential risk hanging over their jobs?

Decades ago, Kansans decided a civil service system made good sense to ensure quality public services through the creation and maintenance of a trained, professional, motivated workforce. That decision was the right one then, and keeping that system in place is the right one today.

I urge the committee to reject HB 2384. Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would be pleased to stand for any questions.