

Good afternoon members of the Kansas Agricultural and Natural Resources Committee,

I come before you today as a concerned junior livestock exhibitor and more importantly as a future representative of the agriculture industry. My name is Eva Hinrichsen and I am currently a junior at Rock Creek High School in St. George, Kansas and ask for your support on House Bill 2546. I am an active member of 4H, FFA and three junior cattle breed associations and have the privilege of showing cattle at the local, state and national levels. I have traveled to many different facilities across the country and consider the Kansas State Fairgrounds to be one of the top choices to hold events.

I have exhibited cattle at the Kansas State Fair for 8 years during my 4H career and my family has exhibited cattle over the past 30 years at these fairgrounds. Showing livestock is our family choice of sports. Through hard work and preparation, my brother and I shared a wonderful honor this past year at the fair. My heifer was chosen as the Grand Champion Angus female and my brother exhibited the Reserve Grand Champion Angus female. In addition, these heifers also claimed the Grand and Reserve Bred and Owned heifer honors as they were not purchased but raised out of our personal cows from our ranch's program.

Furthermore, I understand the Kansas State Fair is more than competitive events as it is a unique learning opportunity for youth to gain valuable leadership skills and become the next line of advocates for the agriculture industry. Outside of the regular cattle shows, I had the chance to participate in the legislative showmanship competition. This is where I assisted your fellow legislative representatives in learning the necessary skills of exhibiting cattle in the show ring. I took great pride in being able to professionally interact with people at this level of public service and promote the number one industry in our state.

Furthermore, as a Kansas Northeast District FFA officer and local FFA chapter officer, I have worked in the FFA barn on the fairgrounds. It is here that I gained an even greater appreciation of what the fair offers to the "normal" fairgoer. Numerous elementary school classes and adults visit the FFA barn to see the champion animals and the FFA exhibits. More importantly, I can share a glimpse into the world of agriculture as I answer their questions on how and why things are done a certain way or help them interact with the various exhibits. I always hope I have made the positive impression that agriculture touches everyone in the world in some way.

The fair offers some of the better facilities to exhibit livestock and display other goods or services as compared to other venues I have visited. We are fortunate to have several buildings that are in good repair but also have others that are starting to show their wear. The support of House Bill 2546, would benefit the Kansas State Fair in assisting to defray the cost of some of these improvements to our fair facilities. More importantly, well maintained facilities are a drawing point for exhibitors and attendees alike as they show the pride we have in our state, exhibits and agriculture as well as the safety and comfort of all visitors. Personally, I view the fair as an inviting gateway to introduce the urban residents to the rural population.

I again ask you to show support for this bill to ensure the opportunities for youth to gain valuable experience in leadership, education and showcasing Kansas agriculture are here today and in the future.