



**Testimony on HB 2185
Terry Forsyth, President
Working Kansas Alliance**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony on behalf of the Working Kansas Alliance, a group of union and non-union organizations representing Kansas workers and their families.

Working Kansas Alliance supports HB 2185 because allowing communities to enact a prevailing wage would benefit working Kansans in those communities.


Kansas was the first state to pass a statewide prevailing wage law for its own public work projects in 1891. In 1987 Kansas repealed its state prevailing wage law. In 2013 the Kansas Legislature went a step further and passed HB 2069 which banned local governments from requiring contractors to pay a prevailing wage on public projects.

The government that governs best is the one closest to the people, the local government. Local governments are the closest governing entity to their communities and represent their communities best. They know the problems people in their community are facing and local governments should have the proper powers to govern efficiently. Blocking local governments from having control over wage requirements is bad for Kansas workers and their communities.

A study on the economic analysis of prevailing wage laws found that "Prevailing wages provide social benefits from higher wages, better workplace safety, and increased government revenues, and increases overall workforce skill levels."¹ A recent study on the economic analysis of the impact of Kansas' repeal of prevailing wage statues in Sedgwick County and Wyandotte County Kansas by Michael P Kelsay of UMKC found that "the repeal of the prevailing wage statutes in Kansas did not decrease total construction costs as claimed by proponents."²

Prevailing wage ensures that all workers are provided with basic health care and paid leave protection. The economic data on prevailing wage is clear: Jobs are not destroyed, employer profits do not decline, construction costs do not increase, and regions with high standards do not suffer disinvestment.

The changes outlined in HB 2185 are drastically needed to protect Kansas workers and bolster economic activity in Kansas. The Working Kansas Alliance supports HB 2185



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1. Nooshin Mahalia, *Prevailing Wages and Government Contracting Costs* (Economics Policy Institute, 2008), 1-2
2. Michael P Kelsay, *An Economics Analysis of the Impact of Kansas Repeal of Prevailing Wage Statutes in Sedgwick County, Kansas And Wyandotte County, Kansas* (University of Missouri – Kansas City, 2016), 5