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Chairman Kelly and Honorable Members of the House Financial Institutions and Pensions Committee,

My name is Robert Choromanski, and I am the Executive Director of the Kansas Organization of State Employees (KOSE) which is the largest labor union in the State of Kansas representing Executive Branch employees. KOSE represents 7,500 State of Kansas Employees and 1,501 corrections officers and counselors.

We would like to commend Rep. Jennings for bringing HB 2448 forward, which provides membership in the KP&F retirement system for security officers of the Kansas Department of Corrections. At this point in time we are testifying neutral on the bill as we are currently polling our member corrections officers on this bill. To best represent our membership, we strive to do our due diligence and get feedback from all members who will be directly impacted by legislation such as this.

Certainly, the retirement benefit current and future correction officers would have access to would be better. The benefit multiplier for KP&F is 2.50%, compared to 1.85% for KPERS Correction members hired on or after 7/1/2009 and 1.75% for service before 1/1/14 and 1.85% for service after 1/1/14 for KPERS correction members hired before 7/1/2009. The final average salary used to determine benefits is more generous to KP&F members compared to KPERS. And, KP&F members generally are able to retire with a full benefit at a younger age.

A couple points to consider would be that employee contributions would increase from 6% to 7.15%. and the vesting period in the retirement plan would jump from 5 years to 15 years for members on or after 7/1/93 and 20 years for members before 7/1/93.

Correction officer workplaces are unique and dangerous, and we commend the effort this proposal makes to recognize this fact. While shuffling current and future correction officers into a new retirement plan may make the job more attractive, we encourage the legislature to also address other important factors that also drive high turnover including low wages and inadequate worker protections. We appreciate your consideration of our testimony on HB 2448