

Written Testimony for Public Hearing KS Senate Committee on Federal and State Affairs

Testimony in Opposition to SB 157 and SB 158

February 15, 2017

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S.B. No. 157 and 158 KS Senate Committee of Federal and State Affairs

Good Morning Committee Members. Our names are Amy Herman, Community Development Director and Danielle Rogg, Latino Ministry Coordinator for Mission Southside, an organization bringing Help and Hope to Southern Johnson County. We are deeply engaged in 17 under resourced apartment and mobile home communities providing advocacy, meeting physical and spiritual needs and working to empower these residents to emerge as leaders within these communities. Many of the communities consist of several hard working Hispanic families. These families are the fabric of what makes this part of Johnson County unique and part of the community that we have come to appreciate and value as residents of Olathe.

These families are a valuable part of our community and create the diversity that this country was founded on. They bring hard working, family oriented, cultural values which have enriched our community. These families have come to feel safe here. Many of our families have appreciated the stark contrast from the corrupt law enforcement they find in their home country. Over the last four years our organization has worked to create trust, communication and a positive relationship between the municipalities, law enforcement officers and municipality officials including the Human Resources Commission. The result of this is people who are more assured to call local enforcement in these volatile situations. We have seen people in domestic violence situations and situations of physical harm feel comfortable calling their local law enforcement instead of hiding it, thus resulting in a safer community.

Would it surprise you to know that a woman who continually was beaten up by her husband and tried to depend on her local law enforcement in Mexico to protect her, escaped to America? She left behind her children and ran away from the hospital with broken ribs, and an aneurysm from continued kicks to her head. She was given 2 years to live, but came here to die in peace.

Would it surprise you to know that a family from Honduras repeatedly went to their local law enforcement because their son who was in a class of 40 kids was beaten up and continually came home with bruises and ripped clothes not from other students but from the teachers? When he got to America they discovered he was extremely bright and was bored in class in his home country where the teachers were abusing him.

Would it surprise you to know that a family from Honduras, who ran a successful Bodega, was being extorted by gangs? As much as they sought help from local law enforcement, the gangs offered them a better incentive. After the extortion reached an all time high and the gang members showed up at school to threaten their young child, they left in the middle of the night to come to America to seek safety.

This is a drop in the bucket for the families who seek refuge here in the US where our law enforcement is governed and enforced by law.

The answer is not jeopardizing our relationship with local law enforcement, the answer is some form of comprehensive immigration reform that would begin to address our broken system.

We would like to request that you protect the residents of these communities that would be hurt by this proposed bill. For many, sending them back to their home country is a sure death sentence. These families are hardworking key contributors to our community and our community is a better place because of what they bring.