

TESTIMONY OPPOSING HB 2717

From

Mel Marsh

I am writing the Kansas Legislature In opposition to House Bill 2717 which would eliminate the Safe and Welcoming Resolution passed by the Unified Government Commission. For 5 years dedicated residents of Wyandotte County and other members of the Kansas City community worked diligently to pass this resolution. Now that it is passed, in a partisan move, the Attorney General is trying to obstruct the will of Wyandotte County in improving the lives of immigrants and residents. The two part bill will first enable immigrants and other residents who are unable to secure identification a Municipal ID card. This card will not allow them to get drivers licenses or be used for other legal purposes. What it will do is allow them to cash paychecks, enter their children's schools to meet with their teachers, and participate in other activities where identification is needed. Immigrants, documented and undocumented, are an integral part of the community in Wyandotte County, making up a large portion of the population. Lack of identification is detrimental to both the immigrants and the community. A look at Central Ave on KCK will show how having a vibrant immigrant community has been extremely beneficial to Kansas City, Kansas.

The second part of the resolution pertains to law enforcement and ICE interactions. Under the resolution ICE would still be notified of an undocumented immigrant's arrest on a criminal charge. However, there is no legal requirement for law enforcement to notify ICE in normal non-criminal interaction with an undocumented immigrant. In the present environment victims of crimes are frightened to call the police, take care of routine business at the courthouse or their children's schools, or participate in community activities for fear of deportation.

Immigrants have been found to be more law abiding than the rest of the population. We need our immigrants to fill our factories and companies and be thriving members of the community. Kansas City knows what is best for their community. Please do not pass HB 2717 and take away the local control that Kansas City, Kansas should be able to exercise for good of the community.

Thank you.

Mel Marsh

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