

March 14, 2022

Senate Commerce Committee
Chairwoman Senator Renee Erickson
Room 546-S
Kansas State Capitol

Chairwoman Erickson and Committee Members,

I am writing you today to share my strong opposition to SB 511. As the longest serving Unified Government Commissioner in Wyandotte County, I believe SB 511 will create an unduly burden on local governments. Furthermore, this bill will increase costs for local governments who will ultimately have to shift the burden to taxpayers.

Some make ask and argue that this bill will not create a burden on local governments and instead only creates a burden on Unions. That though is false. The Unified Government of Wyandotte County negotiates and has contracts with 13 different Unions. Provisions in this bill require employers, in our case the Unified Government, to email and confirm the signing with every individual signing an authorization card. In essence, someone would need to send thousands of emails to confirm the signing of these cards. That is a huge burden to place on local governments like the Unified Government.

Additionally, provisions call for the employer to immediately cease the deduction of dues with a request from an employee. As of now, we can anticipate a union's one year renewal and be prepared for requests to cancel dues deductions. Without having an anticipated time period, the Unified Government will be forced to constantly monitor this. With 13 bargaining units and numerous employees, the Unified Government would need a dedicated person to monitor the cancelation of dues deductions.

Currently, the Unified Government uses outside counsel to handle most aspects with the 13 different bargaining units. If we were to shift more work to them to make sure we are ceasing deductions immediately, in fear of a lawsuit if not, increased legal expenses will occur. The other option would be to hire additional staff to handle the possible increase in requests. Additional staff and/or increased legal fees ultimately increase costs which will have to be transferred to the tax payer.

Ultimately, this bill has not been fully vetted. Though, I do not anticipate a huge increase in dropping union membership, although the proponents will tell you otherwise, this bill would force us to prepare for an instance of issuing thousands of confirmation emails and/or thousands of ceasing dues deductions. Therefore, I cannot support this bill knowing the burden that will be placed on the Unified Government and the expense which will ultimately be transferred to the tax payer.

Sincerely,

Mike Kane
Commissioner, District 5
Unified Government of Wyandotte County