

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMERCE COMMITTEE.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Karin Brownlee at 8:30 a.m. on March 21, 2003 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Senator Brungardt, absent
Senator Wagle, excused

Committee staff present: April Holman, Legislative Research
Deb Hollon, Legislative Research
Mitch Rice, Revisor of Statutes
Sarah Samuelson, Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: A.J. Kotich, Kansas Department of Human Resources
Representative Nichols
Sandy Barnett, Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and
Domestic Violence

Others attending: See attached list.

Chairperson Brownlee opened the hearing on HB 2329 regarding the Wage Payment Act. A.J. Kotich testified in support of the bill. (Attachment 1) This bill proposes two amendments to the Kansas Wage Payment Act. First, it amends the definition of an employer to include limited liability companies. Second, the bill updates the personal responsibility for the payment section of the act so it will apply across the board to all business entities, including limited liability companies and other organizations that did not exist when the current law was enacted in 1973. Current law applies only to corporations.

There were no opponents wishing to testify. Chairperson Brownlee closed the hearing on HB 2329. Senator Barone moved to recommend the bill favorable for passage. Senator Emler seconded. The motion carried.

Chairperson Brownlee opened the hearing on HB 2353 regarding employment security insurance for domestic violence survivors. Representative Nichols testified in support of the bill. (Attachment 2) He said that this bill restates current interpretation of Kansas law in order to ensure that victims of domestic violence are not disqualified from obtaining unemployment compensation benefits if they must leave work. Representative Nichols has had personal experience with this issue. His sister was murdered by her abusive husband as he followed her home from work to her new apartment. If the policy of Kansas was clearly spelled out, victims of domestic violence could clearly see that they have the potential to obtain unemployment compensation should they have to leave their jobs to protect their lives.

Sandy Barnett, Kansas Coalition Against Sexual and Domestic Violence, testified in support of HB 2353.

CONTINUATION SHEET

MINUTES OF THE SENATE COMMERCE COMMITTEE at 8:30 a.m. on March 21, 2003 in Room 123-S of the Capitol.

(Attachments 3 and 4) Domestic violence impacts the workplace in a number of ways. Some women must travel long distances to seek a shelter, and must quit their jobs. In some cases, the batterer is a work colleague of the victim. It is not unusual for a victim to be stalked and battered in the parking lot of their employment site. Batterers often follow their victims from work to learn where they are living or staying, or they come to the workplace because they know they will find their victim there.

Chairperson Brownlee closed the hearing on HB 2353. Senator Emler moved to recommend the bill favorable for passage. Senator Bunten seconded. The motion carried.

The committee discussed HB 2289 regarding the Kansas Development Finance Authority. Some senators have reservations about KDFA putting out broadband, as private companies do this for profit. April Holman said that the municipalities would own the infrastructure and would lease it to the providers. The revenue stream to pay off the bonds may be inadequate. Senator Brownlee said that the municipalities will need to update their technology if they own the infrastructure, which could prove to be too costly.

Senator Barone moved to amend the bill by deleting page 7 line 32 through page 8 line 26. Senator Emler seconded. The motion carried.

The committee decided to let this bill lie and carry it over to the next session.

The committee discussed HB 2208 regarding Sedgwick County Starbonds. Chairperson Brownlee stated that she still has some concerns with this bill and the committee will revisit it on Tuesday. She also noted that HB 2332 has already passed out of the committee.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for March 25, 2003 at 8:30 a.m. in Room 123-S.