

Senator Anthony Hensley's Testimony on Senate Bill 179

On or after January 1, 2014, The Hire Kansans First Act will require any contractor or subcontractor under a state contract worth \$100,000 or more in state tax dollars to employ at least 70% of their employees from Kansas.

Additionally, on or after January 1, 2014, any company seeking benefits from the state under PEAK, HPIP or STAR Bonds must employ at least a 70% of their employees from Kansas.

Exclusions to this requirement include lease agreements, lease-purchase agreements, contracts that are solely for the acquisition of goods or commodities, and projects that require employees with expertise not readily available in Kansas.

The Act also excludes contracts entered into by counties, cities and any other local units of government.

Senate Bill 179 is truly a jobs bill.

It makes sense that if Kansas taxpayers are funding a state project, contractors and subcontractors should employ Kansas workers first.

Perhaps more than any other so called "pro-growth" policy, this legislation will actually put Kansans to work.

It makes little sense to continue to allow state tax dollars to pay the wages of out of state workers, when we have Kansas workers available to do the same work. When these workers leave our state, our tax dollars go with them.

Why not ensure that Kansas tax dollars remain in Kansas while, in turn, those tax dollars will go back into our state's economy?

Some have claimed that employing Kansas workers first will drive up the cost of projects. This argument has no basis and there are no figures to prove that this legislation would increase costs.

Others question what if our neighboring states reciprocate and enact their own law employing their workers first on state projects? Won't this make it hard for Kansas workers to be employed on out-of-state projects? Well, this could happen, but this bill is not a 100% mandate.

And, most important, we will be employing more Kansans on our own projects.

The fact is that as our state emerges from the recession, we must consider policies that will actually put Kansans back to work. The Hire Kansans First Act is a straight forward, common sense way to do just that.