

1515 E. 30<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Hutchinson, KS 67502  
www.kansasco-op.coop



Phone: 785-233-4085  
Toll Free: 888-603-2667

Date: January 30, 2020  
To: Representative Sean Tarwater, Chairman  
House Commerce, Labor and Economic Development Committee  
From: Shahira Stafford, Kansas Cooperative Council  
RE: **House Bill 2507, business liability for high school work-based learning programs**

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit comments in support of House Bill 2507. The Kansas Cooperative Council (KCC) represents all types of cooperatively-structured businesses including agriculture, utility, financial, and consumer cooperatives. Simply, cooperatives differ from other businesses because they are member-owned, member-controlled, democratically-governed, and profits are returned back to our patrons.

Our agricultural cooperatives often have grain, agronomy, precision ag, seed, feed, fuel, and financing operations. Jobs in these fields are vast, good-paying, and in demand. High school work-based programs are one way to expose students to the wide variety of careers available in the agribusiness space.

Agricultural cooperatives are ready to invest in vocational and technical training programs. However, many of our members are concerned about liability protection for their high school apprentices. House Bill 2507 would address this by extending the school district's liability insurance to cover enrolled students participating in such work-based learning.

Lack of a skilled workforce is a top inhibitor of growth and expansion for many of our cooperatives and continues to be a primary concern of industry leaders. Employment in the agriculture industry is a key component to strengthening the Kansas economy; and we believe that House Bill 2507 would lessen some barriers in recruiting and training the next generation of agribusiness men and women.

Thank you for the opportunity provide testimony today.

Shahira Stafford  
Kansas Cooperative Council  
(785) 845-8535