



Written Testimony in Support of HB2506
Mr. Daniel Murray
Kansas State Director, National Federation of Independent Business

Senate Commerce Committee
February 13, 2020

NFIB Kansas is pleased to submit testimony in support of HB2506. NFIB Kansas is the leading small business organization in Kansas representing small and independent businesses. A non-profit, nonpartisan organization founded in 1943, NFIB Kansas represents the consensus views of its about 4,000 members in Kansas.

HB 2506 would amend current statutes regarding the occupational and professional licensing standards for regulatory agencies to receive and review applications, expanding from just military spouses and military service members to include any individual who has established or plans to establish residency in Kansas. NFIB Kansas does not have an official position on the intricacies or specific language contained in HB2506. And, we understand there may be some needed changes to the bill to ensure it is practical for particular trades and professions. However, we support measures, like HB2506, which are designed to attract and retain qualified workers to Kansas.

The U.S. economy is nearing a 10-year expansion record, already the second longest recorded in U.S. history. The unemployment rate has been at or below 5 percent since 2016, making employment conditions for small businesses difficult because the economy is “officially” at full employment. Historically high levels of owners report that their most difficult problem in operating their business is finding qualified labor. Record levels of small business owners have at least one job opening they are not able to fill. Most people who want to work already have a job, leaving few recruitment options available for small business owners. The government reports a million more job openings than unemployed people looking for a job in the last few years of the expansion.

In NFIB’s most recent *Small Business Economic Trends* survey, **finding qualified workers remained the top issue for owners**, with 23% reporting it as their number one problem. Fifty-three percent reported hiring or trying to hire, but 94% of those owners reported few or no qualified applicants for the positions they were trying to fill. Sixty-two percent of construction firms reported few or no qualified applicants and 46% cited the shortage of qualified labor as their top business problem. The manufacturing sector reported comparable figures with 63% and 24% respectively. ***Thirty-three percent (seasonally adjusted) of ALL owners reported job openings they could not fill in the current period.*** Sixty-one percent had job openings in construction.¹

HB2506 can be a piece to solving the workforce shortage puzzle that is currently confounding small business owners. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments today and we urge you support of the bill.

¹ NFIB Small Business Economic Trends: <https://www.nfib.com/surveys/small-business-economic-trends/>