

Testimony IN OPPOSITION to SB 179
Before the Senate Commerce Committee
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Chairperson Lynn and Members of the Committee:

Good Morning. My name is Juanita R. Beck. I am an employee of the Kansas Department of Corrections. Today I speak to you as a private citizen, and not as a representative of any state agency. I would like to share my views regarding Senate Bill No. 179. I am both a union steward for the Kansas Organization of State Employees (KOSE) and that organization's Vice President. Our KOSE M.O.A (Memorandum of Agreement) sets forth the rights of not only the different agencies as employers, but also the rights of all employees. It protects the employee from unreasonable disciplinary actions and provides an avenue for employees to speak up by using the grievance process. As a steward, I frequently represent employees who have been unjustly targeted or disciplined.

Now that agreement was made between the State of Kansas and KOSE in good faith is under attack by Senate Bill No.179. If this bill is passed it will threaten the rights and freedoms of all of us who work so hard and long for Kansas. We are citizens, voters, and taxpayers. Senator Wagle recently said, "if we err, we must err on the side of freedom." Although she was speaking about gun laws, her comment is very germane here as well. Our ability to have input into our working conditions is a freedom, and one that should not be limited.

Senate Bill No. 179 attacks the rights of employees to be protected against arbitrary actions by and from supervisors. The grievance process is the employer and employee's avenue to speak up and be heard. Does not this committee realize that M.O.A. protects all? Why is our legislature attacking our rights and freedoms as citizens? What are all of you afraid of?

All employees, no matter where they work, are entitled to dignity, respect and fair treatment in the workplace. Our KOSE MOA protects those rights. The M.O.A. protects this the right to sit down and talk with management. Understand that this process often paves the way for stronger and more equal understanding between the two parties. Being heard during this process allows both parties a voice about the issues and often assists with finding a solution that is often beneficial to all. This does not say that employee is right it just means they have a voice. By maintaining the M.O.A. the rights of the employees regarding promotions, demotions, layoffs, furloughs, transfers as well as grievances are protected. Thank you again for allowing me to speak and I will take any questions you have.