

Testimony on Senate Bill 212

Senate Commerce Committee

Nathan McAlister

Good morning Chairwoman Lynn and members of the Senate Commerce Committee. My name is Nathan McAlister. I am a history teacher, at Royal Valley Middle School, in Mayetta, KS. Moreover, I serve as an educational consultant and professional development trainer for schools around the nation. I come before you today in opposition of Senate Bill 212 for one essential reason, overreach.

In its current form this bill represents big government at its worst, usurping the power of local school boards. Boards of education already have the power to deny employees supplementary payroll deductions. If a school board should so choose, it may, as part of its authority, deny teachers the right to deduct union dues or any other ancillary deductions from their paycheck. But it is the duly elected, local school board who should make those decisions. Further deductions are accomplished at no cost to the school districts. Thus deductions from paychecks for a variety of reasons have been a time-honored tradition.

In addition to usurping the power of duly elected school boards, Senate Bill 212 usurps the power of the consumer. When did it become fashionable for this government to tell the citizens of its state how best to spend their money? It is okay for my school district to deduct, at my request, United Way contributions, 403(b) payments, or vision insurance. But membership in a professional education association is a bridge too far? What happened to "That government is best which governs least, because its people discipline themselves"? Shouldn't I, as a free adult citizen of this state, be allowed to make financial decisions for myself in partnership with my employer?

What then are the consequences if Senate Bill 212 passes? In short Senate Bill 212 aims to segregate public employees, as consumers, because it targets only the convenient payment of their professional dues. The payroll deduction process should be blind to viewpoint and this bill ensures that it is not. Additionally, Senate Bill 212 seeks to reduce the power of local school boards making them impotent and beholden to the legislature. If legislators genuinely respect and support the teachers and school boards of Kansas, I say truthfully, that actions speak louder than words.

Thank You.