

Testimony IN OPPOSITION to HB 2391
Before the Senate Committee on Commerce
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Chairperson Lynn and Members of the Committee:

Good morning. Thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Sarah LaFrenz Falk, and I have worked for the State of Kansas and for the citizens of Kansas since 2006. Today I am speaking to you as a private citizen, and not as a representative of any state agency. HB 2391 harms state employees by removing the classified system. I encourage you to vote against this bill.

The Classified System

When I go to work each day, there are plenty of things I am concerned with. I am concerned about doing an excellent job every day, doing right by the opportunity to be there. I am concerned about answering the questions, concerns, and worries of my co-workers, constituents, industry, and consultants to the very best of my ability. I am concerned about working with regulations and statutes to make sure they are upheld correctly.

One thing I currently don't have to worry about is whether or not my job will still be mine based on political climate. I also don't have to be concerned that just because someone didn't like the fact that I did my job, rather than bend to an individual's will, that my employment would hinge on someone's personal opinion or complaint. If the classified system is removed, these kind of worries will be very real indeed. There will be no protection for employees just doing their jobs - it will be much too easy to fire at will and for no real justification.

Also, what's to keep a new leadership group from cleaning house every time someone new comes to power? Management at many of our state agencies turns over almost completely when a new governor is elected. If this turnover is allowed to reach down into rank and file workers, the State loses both skilled workers and institutional memory. Retention of people who know their jobs and do them well should be our number one priority. That will not be possible without a classified system.

Fundamentally, our State and its citizens are best served by employees who know their jobs well and can do those jobs without fear of reprisal or unjust action. I encourage you to join me in opposing HB 2391.