

RE: HB 2573

Senator Ostmeyer and members of the Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee:

It is an honor to sponsor and testify in support of HB 2573, because this bill uses ingenuity and problem-solving to make the legislative committee process available to the people of Kansas.

This bill uses already established state resources within the information Network of Kansas (INK) to wire committee rooms to stream to the Internet. The bill before you today will add the livestreaming of certain legislative proceedings to the responsibility of INK. Essentially, INK will work with the director Of Legislative Administrative Services (LAS), under the direction of the Legislative Coordinating Council (LCC), to evaluate and install livestreaming technology in certain committee rooms. The bill is drafted to give INK, LAS, and the LCC flexibility in determining the rooms and the technology to utilize.

The bill passed by the House indicates that the INK board is intended to be responsible for funding the technology, installation, and streaming services. The original Fiscal Note does not reflect this fact and was incorrect in attributing the costs to the State General Fund. The new Fiscal Note that has been provided reflects that the bill would have no fiscal effect on the state for implementation. The original bill was amended to ensure this project is not something that will be required of INK to fund in perpetuity, since INK's mission is to assist only with the start-up costs of state technology projects like this one.

Through this bill, we have an opportunity to partner with an existing state resource to do a true service for the people of Kansas, and bring committee rooms into the Internet age. This is a win for transparency and a win for the people of Kansas. Transparency is essential to the democratic process and this bill will give the people of Kansas another window into the legislative process.

Thanks for your time and I'll be happy to stand for questions.

Sincerely,

Representative John Whitmer
District 93