

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Lana Gordon at 3:30 P.M. on March 9, 2006 in Room 526-S of the Capitol.

All members were present.

Committee staff present:

Renae Jefferies, Revisor of Statutes
Helen Pedigo, Revisor of Statutes
Carlene Maag, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee:

Representative Edward O'Malley
Craig Kaberline, Executive Director, Kansas Area Agencies on Aging Association
Toni Wellshear, AARP Kansas
Jim Snyder, Silver Haired Legislature
Julie Govert Walter, Executive Director, North Central-Flint Hills Area Agency on Aging, Inc

Others attending:

See attached list.

HB 2993 - Workforce development, senior citizen training program

HB 2999 - Competitive grant program to develop an older Kansan workforce

Representative Ed O'Malley presented testimony on **HB 2993** and **HB 2999**. (Attachment 1)

HB 2993 requires the Department of Commerce to create a strategic plan for delivery of services to seniors and must be submitted to the Legislature by December 1, 2006.

The plan should include how resources may be used so senior citizens can have access to workforce development, the minimum amount of money that will be spend and examples of programs planned to implement or enhance workforce development for seniors. It was thought it would be beneficial if dialogue on senior workforce development could begin in January 07.

HB 2999 creates a competitive grant program to be administered by the Department on Aging, to issue grants to eligible entities for implementing and developing workforce development programs tailored to senior citizens.

Craig Kaberline, Executive Director, Kansas Area Agencies on Aging Association (K4A) gave testimony in Support of **HB 2993**. The mission of K4A is to work to improve services and supports for all older Kansans and their caregivers.

It is believed that **HB 2993** is a step in the right direction to answer questions and concerns about how older worker issues are being addressed by the Kansas Department of Commerce. (Attachment 2)

Toni Wellshear spoke as a proponent, representing AARP Kansas. **HB 2993** addresses the necessary guidelines that would ensure every senior citizen has access to workforce development and training. It is suggested that line 27 (1) be revised from age 60 or more to age 55 or more. (Attachment 3)

Jim Snyder, a member of the Silver Haired Legislature gave testimony as a proponent for **HB 2993**. As of July 1, 2004, seniors 55 and older constitute 22.4% of the population. Seniors represent 40% of the possible work population of the state of Kansas.

However, no monies are set aside for training this group of people, to re-enter the work force. **HB 2993** would bring responsibility for the administration of funds for training for Seniors. (Attachment 4)

Julie Govert Walter, Executive Director of the North Central-Flint Hills area Agency on Aging gave testimony as a proponent for **HB 2993**. This bill asks for information concerning how workforce funds are currently

used to assist job-seekers 55 and older. If passed, this legislation would promote and encourage the Department of Commerce to learn more about the work of the successful Older Kansas Employment Program (OKEP) which has served certain areas of our state extremely well. If asked for suggestions to improve this bill, it would be to specifically mention the role and performance of OKEP in the bill. (Attachment 5)

Miss Walter also gave testimony in support of **HB 2999**. Training funds are needed to help older job seekers seeking training in keyboarding, computers and using “high tech” office systems. This bill, if adequately funded, would open the doors for innovation. This bill could move many initiatives, including ways to link youth to the values of our older workers. (Attachment 6)

Representative Terrie Huntington gave a Sub Committee report on **HB 2194**. The Committee met with members of WIA boards from District, two, three, four and five. Makeup and composition of the boards was discussed. Another sub committee meeting has been scheduled for March 14.

The meeting adjourned at 4:25 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for March 14.

HOUSE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE GUEST LIST

DATE: 3-9-04

NAME	REPRESENTING
Julie Govert Walter	
Joni Hellshear	AARP / Silvia Harill Legator
Armond Cappobianco	Dept of Commerce
Juw Helfmann	KSHL
Joni Snyder	KSHL
Barb Covert	KDOT



REP. EDWARD J. O'MALLEY JR.
STATE OF KANSAS, 24TH DISTRICT

Testimony in Support of House Bills 2993 and 2999

March 9, 2006

House Bills 2993 and 2999 both focus on issues related to senior workforce development.

I recognize the issue of workforce development is complex and, quite frankly, relatively new to state government. I applaud the Department of Commerce's effort to create a seamless network for Kansans seeking employment. While we have heard many great successes regarding workforce development, we have also discovered some shortcomings.

Despite many good efforts, there appears to be a lack of attention to the issue of senior workforce development. Workforce development for this population will become ever more important as our state population continues to age. **Simply grouping seniors with the general population of jobseekers is insufficient.**

Kansas needs unique and creative approaches to addresses the workforce development needs of our seniors.

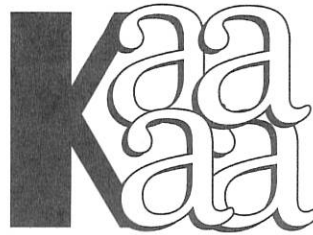
House Bill 2993 simply requires the Department of Commerce to create a strategic plan for delivery of services to seniors. That plan must be submitted to the Legislature by December 1, 2006 and contain:

- how resources may be used to ensure every senior citizen has access to workforce development;
- the minimum amount of money the department plans to spend on workforce development for seniors;
- examples of programs the department plans to implement or enhance to promote workforce development for seniors; and
- specific measurable criteria that will be used to determine the effectiveness of the department's plan.

House Bill 2999 creates a competitive grant program, to be administered by the Department on Aging, to issue grants to eligible entities for implementing and developing workforce development programs tailored to senior citizens.

Eligible entities include small businesses, local governments, nonprofit organizations and/or faith-based organizations. Workforce programs developed by these entities may provide insight and ideas for the Department of Commerce when they craft future plans for senior workforce development.

THE
KANSAS
AREA AGENCIES
ON AGING
ASSOCIATION



Meeting the Needs of Older Kansans

1720 SW TOPEKA BOULEVARD • TOPEKA, KS 66612 • 785-235-8734 • FAX - 785-235-8747

**Craig Kaberline, Executive Director
Kansas Area Agencies on Aging Association
To House Economic Development Committee
March 9, 2006**

Testimony in Support of House Bill 2993

Chairperson Gordon and Members of the Committee:

The Kansas Area Agencies on Aging Association's (K4A) mission is to work to improve services and supports for all older Kansans and their caregivers. K4A represents all eleven Area Agencies on Aging (AAA) who provide information and coordinate services for seniors in all 105 counties of Kansas.

As you have probably heard throughout the last few years from seniors and those representing them, there have been a lot of questions and concerns about how older worker issues are being addressed by the Kansas Department of Commerce and the workforce development centers throughout the state of Kansas. This is a critical question that needs to be answered; along with; if there is a problem in this area how is it going to be addressed. I believe this legislation is a step in the right direction toward answering the questions that have been raised.

I believe the key to any plan for improvement is that there are outcomes and the outcomes are measurable; not just providing information or counting the number of people who come through the door. The performance measures need to include how many older workers received assistance to be trained, re-trained, and to gain employment.

In the next few years around 50% of the Kansas workforce will be over age 50. The economic future of this state is going to depend on how well this state addresses the issues of the older workforce.

I ask for your support of HB 2993.

AREA AGENCIES ON AGING:

CENTRAL PLAINS • EAST CENTRAL KANSAS • JAYHAWK • JOHNSON COUNTY • NORTH CENTRAL - FL
NORTHWEST KANSAS • SOUTH CENTRAL KANSAS • SOUTHEAST KANSAS • SOUTHWEST KANSAS •

e-mail: k4aed@hotmail.com

House Economic Development
Attachment 2
March 9, 2006



March 9, 2006
Representative Lana Gordon, Chair
Economic Development Committee

Good afternoon Madame Chairperson Gordon and distinguished members of the Economic Development Committee. My name is Toni Wellshear and I am a Volunteer Advocate for AARP Kansas. AARP Kansas represents the views of more than 350,000 members in the state. AARP promotes the expansion of employment opportunities for older workers by helping them and our state employers meet the changing needs of an aging workforce.

Before my retirement last year, I had the privilege of serving as a program coordinator for the Older Kansans Employment Program and the federal Senior Community Service Employment Program under the Older Americans Act. During my employment years I became acutely aware of the funding barriers faced by the service providers and the lack of training and employment services provided to Kansas older job seekers.

AARP supports HB 2993 because it requires the state's workforce development planners to include a vital segment of the Kansas workforce that has been ignored. This is especially important now that the pool of available workers under age sixty is shrinking dramatically, while the demand for workers is increasing.

Within the senior workforce group is a spectrum of talent that ranges from highly skilled to low-skilled. One training plan would not fit all. Some need remedial training in literacy, numeracy, basic computer operations, and help with selling themselves to potential employers. Others need technical training to qualify for high tech job openings. Some are already employable, but need help with job seeking skills and job development.

HB 2993 addresses the necessary guidelines that would ensure every senior citizen has access to workforce development and training. It provides for a plan of action that will be a major step in the right direction concerning the amount of funds the Kansas Department of Commerce plans to spend on workforce development for seniors. HB 2993 would also make a strong statement for improving the current the Annual Senior Services Coordination Employment Program Plan and the Strategic Workforce Investment Act Five Year Plan submitted by the Department of Commerce to the U.S. Department of Labor.

Although AARP membership eligibility begins at age 50 and we would like to see members fully represented, we suggest at this time a change in the age on line 27 (1) "*Senior citizen*" means any Kansas resident age 60 or more, be revised to age 55 or more. This change would be consistent with the age group identified under the state's Older Kansans Employment law.

AARP appreciates the many hours of time this committee and the Joint Economic Development Committee have spent to review workforce development; we also appreciate your oversight regarding the efficiency of funds being expended under the present system. The passage of HB 2993 will provide other states facing the same senior workforce problems with a model law to replicate.

Thank you for your concern about doing the right thing to ensure that workers of all ages are treated fairly.

HOUSE BILL 2993
MARCH 9, 2006
KANSAS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

I am Jim Snyder, a member of the Silver Haired Legislature and the Silver Haired Legislature Council. Even though our members did not consider HB 2993 in our previous Council, it does address the concept we approve of for senior citizens of Kansas in dealing with the Federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998.

This program had actual expenditures of \$19,276,439 (more than 19.2 million) in 2005 for the State of Kansas—monies administered by the Kansas Department of Commerce—however nothing was spent nor earmarked for Kansas Seniors, according to the Secretary of that Department at one of the Joint meetings of the Economic Development Committee earlier this year.

In the previous program in Kansas before the Workforce Investment Act took over, about 3% of the funds were 'set aside' for exclusive use in order to work with one of Kansas' most skilled groups—those age 55 and older. If that still held today, there would be about \$500,000 which could be used for this group....a group that constitutes more than 22.4% of the total Kansas population....and when under 18 year olds are deducted....constitutes nearly 40% of the working population in Kansas.

A recent hearing before a sub-committee of this Economic Development Committee was attended by associates of 4 of the 5 local WIA Boards. There were 2 Executive Directors of Boards and 2 officers of the other 2 Boards. It became very obvious that the work done with the above funds as far as the communities in which their "one-stop" locations were was extremely permissive and that little or no efforts were made to reach out to the work-force which might be available for placement.

The local Boards did point with pride to working with some employers and there were a few—a very few—projects which had been completed.....but for this, they spent more than \$19 million....and in some cases they were even charging agencies who needed to use their facilities a fee for the space—in one case \$5,000 per cubicle and in another by the square foot (an amount was not given).

Yet, nothing is set aside for more than 22% of the Kansas Population—that group of people 55 years and up—who may either wish to re-enter the work force... or in some cases HAVE TO re-enter the workforce.

I feel House Bill 2993 would bring this situation full on to those responsible for the administration of these funds. It seems a shame that they have to be told, but the days of hearings which I attended, illustrated nothing more than a total lack of help for Kansas Seniors.

Thank you.

House Economic Development
Attachment 4
March 9, 2006

Table 2: Annual Estimates of the Population by Sex and Age for Kansas: April 1, 2000 to July 1, 2004

4-2

Sex and age	Population estimates					April 1, 2000	
	July 1, 2004	July 1, 2003	July 1, 2002	July 1, 2001	July 1, 2000	Estimates base	Census
BOTH SEXES	2,735,502	2,724,786	2,712,896	2,701,233	2,692,651	2,688,824	2,688,418
Under 5 years	188,782	188,807	188,794	187,323	188,421	188,744	188,708
5 to 9 years	182,970	185,297	188,299	190,969	194,755	195,604	195,574
10 to 14 years	192,669	196,935	199,758	200,569	203,542	204,038	204,018
15 to 19 years	203,322	204,652	206,747	208,121	209,939	210,142	210,118
20 to 24 years	215,224	212,795	207,571	201,712	192,697	190,235	190,167
25 to 29 years	184,571	177,341	172,695	170,855	172,702	173,026	172,975
30 to 34 years	173,932	175,802	176,020	176,164	175,890	175,933	175,878
35 to 39 years	177,740	182,843	190,277	198,801	206,268	207,577	207,549
40 to 44 years	209,813	211,514	212,819	214,225	213,216	212,819	212,802
45 to 49 years	208,283	206,697	203,226	198,786	194,099	192,697	192,679
50 to 54 years	183,519	178,181	173,885	172,739	163,589	161,479	161,468
55 to 59 years	148,545	141,650	135,440	125,049	122,317	121,661	121,645
60 to 64 years	111,553	107,808	103,065	100,419	98,943	98,615	98,608
65 to 69 years	88,437	87,725	87,643	88,728	89,699	90,094	90,085
70 to 74 years	81,697	82,761	84,139	85,008	85,723	85,837	85,831
75 to 79 years	72,359	73,476	73,561	73,744	74,955	75,129	75,125
80 to 84 years	57,031	56,165	55,626	54,993	53,757	53,421	53,418
85 years or more	55,055	54,337	53,331	53,028	52,139	51,773	51,770
Under 18 years	683,491	691,636	699,819	702,373	711,324	713,090	712,993
Under 5 years	188,782	188,807	188,794	187,323	188,421	188,744	188,708
5 to 13 years	335,335	342,480	348,390	351,327	357,135	358,243	358,195
14 to 17 years	159,374	160,349	162,635	163,723	165,768	166,103	166,090
18 to 64 years	1,697,432	1,678,686	1,658,777	1,643,359	1,625,054	1,619,480	1,619,196
18 to 24 years	299,476	296,850	291,350	286,321	278,030	275,673	275,592
25 to 44 years	746,056	747,500	751,811	760,045	768,076	769,355	769,204
45 to 64 years	651,900	634,336	615,616	596,993	578,948	574,452	574,400
65 years and over	354,579	354,464	354,300	355,501	356,273	356,254	356,229
16 years and over	2,131,732	2,114,405	2,095,832	2,081,550	2,064,166	2,058,805	2,058,489
18 years and over	2,052,011	2,033,150	2,013,077	1,998,860	1,981,327	1,975,734	1,975,425
15 to 44 years	1,164,602	1,164,947	1,166,129	1,169,878	1,170,712	1,169,732	1,169,489
Median age (years)	35.8	35.6	35.5	35.4	35.2	35.2	35.2
MALE	1,358,381	1,351,397	1,343,810	1,336,823	1,331,022	1,328,675	1,328,474
Under 5 years	98,026	97,887	97,527	96,590	96,855	97,028	97,012
5 to 9 years	93,803	95,073	96,741	97,992	100,017	100,452	100,433
10 to 14 years	98,992	101,060	102,498	103,074	104,716	104,990	104,981
15 to 19 years	104,758	105,230	106,283	107,036	107,978	108,046	108,040

22.4%

64.6%

24.9%

State Employment and Training Funding

by Agency

Program Name

FY 2005 Actual Expenditures

Italics indicate programs designated as required partners by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA)

Program Name	SGF	Other State			Gifts, Grants, and Donations	TOTAL
		Funds	Local Funds	Federal Funds		
Department of Commerce						
Foreign Labor Certification						
Apprenticeship Program (funding included in WIA total)	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$156,666	\$0	\$156,666
Local Veterans Employment	0	0	0	0	0	0
Disabled Veterans Outreach	0	0	0	662,894	0	662,894
Neighbor, Improve, and Youth Employ (funding included in WIA total)	0	0	0	891,096	0	891,096
Job Service (Wagner Peysen)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Job Training Partnership Act (evolved into WIA)	0	0	0	7,089,065	0	7,089,065
Workforce Investment Act	0	0	0	0	0	0
NAFTA Transitional Adjustment (merged into TAA program)	0	0	0	0	0	0
Older Kansas Employment Program	0	239,430	0	19,276,439	19,276,439	19,276,439
Senior Community Services Employment	0	239,430	0	0	0	239,430
Trade Adjustment Assistance	4,444	0	0	876,475	0	880,919
Migrant & Seasonal Farm worker Programs (funding included in Wagner Peysen total)	0	0	0	1,704,057	0	1,704,057
Wheat Harvest Program	0	0	0	0	0	0
Work ' Opportunity Tax Credit	0	0	0	25,156	0	25,156
Welfare to Work (closed)	0	0	0	193,633	0	193,633
IMPACT	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kansas Industrial Training (FY 05 Award Amounts)	0	14,103,027	0	0	0	14,103,027
Kansas Industrial Retraining (FY05 Award Amounts)	0	1,636,392	0	0	0	1,636,392
Training Equipment Grants - closed	0	870,549	435,275	0	0	1,305,824
Community Service Block Grant --transferred with Housing Division	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kansas Economic Opportunity Initiatives Fund (KEOIF):	0	0	0	0	0	0
Kansas Existing Industry Expansion Program (KEIEP):	0	9,760,996	0	0	0	9,760,996
Re-Employment Services	0	866,875	0	0	0	866,875
Commerce Total	\$4,444	\$27,477,269	\$435,275	\$31,346,057	\$0	\$59,263,045
Department of Corrections						
Offender Programs (Excludes expenditures for 4th time DUI offenders and other "non-program" expenditures included in offender programs budget. (1))	\$4,407,635	\$1,264,666	\$0	\$894,322	\$0	\$6,566,623
Corrections Total	\$4,407,635	\$1,264,666	\$0	\$894,322	\$0	\$6,566,623
Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services (SRS)						
TAF Employment	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$10,585,534	\$0	\$10,585,534
Vocational Rehabilitation (Basic Support Grant & Supported Employment Grant)	5,659,094	135,577	0	27,522,208	0	33,316,879
Food Stamps Employment & Training	17,838	0	0	17,837	0	35,675
SRS Total	\$5,676,932	\$135,577	\$0	\$38,125,579	\$0	\$43,938,088
Department of Education						
Kansas Transition Systems Change Project - Project has ended	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Learn & Serve and Americorps	0	0	1,759,989	1,849,251	0	3,609,240

Older Worker Participants by Program Year

4-7

2002							
	Totals						
	Participant Count	Total Enrollments	Occ Skills Training	Total Expenditures	Total Entered Employment	Total Wages	Average Hourly Wage at Placement
Area I	1739	1769	24	\$0.00	879	\$3,487,819.41	\$7.63
Area II	1445	1469	23	\$47,970.23	781	\$3,494,641.51	\$8.60
Area III	2160	2264	79	\$156,862.08	1010	\$5,957,053.32	\$11.34
Area IV	1641	1766	40	\$116,737.30	839	\$4,671,718.84	\$10.71
Area V	1181	1185	3	\$3,933.19	656	\$2,588,096.33	\$7.59
2002 Totals	8166	8453	169	\$325,502.80	4165	\$20,199,329.41	\$9.33

2003							
	Totals						
	Participant Count	Total Enrollments	Occ Skills Training	Total Expenditures	Total Entered Employment	Total Wages	Average Hourly Wage at Placement
Area I	1558	1575	14	\$150.00	826	\$3,590,094.99	\$8.36
Area II	1450	1476	34	\$54,360.05	849	\$4,436,281.57	\$10.05
Area III	1648	1710	52	\$128,122.83	863	\$5,537,060.04	\$12.34
Area IV	1358	1420	23	\$65,715.21	727	\$3,902,433.26	\$10.32
Area V	1141	1148	5	\$9,763.19	666	\$2,815,285.98	\$8.13
2003 Totals	7155	7329	128	\$258,111.28	3931	\$20,281,155.84	\$9.92

2004							
	Totals						
	Participant Count	Total Enrollments	Occ Skills Training	Total Expenditures	Total Entered Employment	Total Wages	Average Hourly Wage at Placement
Area I	1705	1717	7	\$500.00	795	\$3,746,372.25	\$9.06
Area II	1369	1383	14	\$37,866.40	613	\$2,757,030.22	\$8.65
Area III	1332	1356	23	\$57,958.61	535	\$3,219,214.94	\$11.57
Area IV	1390	1419	13	\$29,815.29	531	\$2,512,026.09	\$9.10
Area V	1194	1217	7	\$16,269.42	535	\$2,183,340.71	\$7.85
2004 Totals	6990	7092	64	\$142,409.72	3009	\$14,417,984.21	\$9.21

NOTES: Some participants are counted in multiple enrollment types and/or multiple areas (same enrollment type)

- The first column contains the distinct count of Participants for all enrollments. They can be counted in multiple areas if enrollments in offices that are in different areas.
- Average wages are based on reported quarterly earnings in the first quarter after exit divided by 520, the number of work hours in a quarter
- Total Expenditures and Expenditures columns only reflect costs for participant services paid to a third party. They do not include program expenditures by the grant recipient

Testimony before House Economic Development Committee on House Bill 2993

March 9, 2006

Good afternoon. My name is Julie Govert Walter. I serve as Executive Director of the North Central-Flint Hills Area Agency on Aging, a private not-for profit organization advocating for and serving older Kansans in 18 counties. Our Agency is based in Manhattan.

One of the programs our Agency has sponsored over the past 24 years, thanks to about \$40,000 of state funding, is the Older Kansans Employment Program. (OKEP) Our organization provides practical, cost-effective assistance to job seekers 55 and over. Offices for OKEP in our region are located in Emporia, Junction City, Manhattan and Salina.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. I speak in support of H.B. 2993 because this bill asks for information concerning the how workforce funds are currently used to assist job-seekers 55 and older.

You have heard testimony before about concerns that older job-seekers are not getting a fair share of funding for services they need to deal with the challenges of age-discrimination and discouragement that often happens when they face a major job-change or must re-enter the workforce.

Let me say that it is hoped that if passed, this legislation would promote and encourage the Department of Commerce to learn more about the work of the successful Older Kansans Employment Program which has served certain areas of our state extremely well for the last 24 years despite severe funding constraints. It is my earnest hope that Area Agencies on Aging and OKEP providers will have a place at the table when the Department of Commerce Workforce experts make their strategic plans.

If I were asked to improve this bill, the only suggestion I would make is that the role and performance of OKEP be mentioned specifically in this legislation.

I believe that past performance is the best predictor of future success. OKEP's successes include consistent performance levels year after year, innovative programs and award-winning initiatives. This is an opportunity for decision-makers to come to understand and appreciate the importance and needs of older workers and the long-standing success and value of the OKEP as strategic decisions are made for our state's workforce system.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to provide this testimony.

Julie Govert Walter, Executive Director
North Central-Flint Hills Area Agency on Aging, Inc.
401 Houston St.
Manhattan, KS 66502

785-776-9294-office

*House Economic
Development
Attachment 5
3-9-2006*

March 9, 2006

Good afternoon. My name is Julie Govert Walter. I serve as Executive Director of the North Central-Flint Hills Area Agency on Aging, a private not-for profit organization advocating for and serving older Kansans in 18 counties. Our Agency is based in Manhattan.

One of the programs our Agency has sponsored over the past 24 years, thanks to about \$40,000 of state funding, is the Older Kansans Employment Program. (OKEP) Our organization provides practical, cost-effective assistance to job seekers 55 and over. Offices for OKEP in our region are located in Emporia, Junction City, Manhattan and Salina.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. I speak in support of H.B. 2999 for these reasons:

- **Training Funds are absolutely needed!** Due to the severe and on-going budget limitations, there are no funds available to access training for OKEP participants in our region. Our Agency, other Area Agencies on Aging and OKEP providers know the challenges older job-seekers face and we have ideas for innovative training programs that meet the needs of older-job seekers and the needs in the Kansas workforce. Skills training in keyboarding, computers and using “high tech” office systems are certainly training areas needed by many older job seekers -- and there indeed many others.

Before joining the staff of the Area Agency on Aging, I worked in adult education. I know that older job-seekers are learners—but they learn differently than younger folks.

Many years ago when our Agency had training funds, we were very successful at working with Community colleges and Vo-tech schools to provide low cost and very effective training programs that met the needs of older job-seekers and provided employers with workers that had excellent skills.

- **Urge and Reward Innovation!** This bill, if passed and adequately funded, would open wide the doors for innovation. Kansas has a wonderful history of sponsoring innovative solutions for older Kansans seeking jobs through the Older Kansans Employment Program. This legislation would energize efforts to build upon the success record of OKEP.

For example, just the other day I was visiting with a county official about the idea of creating some sort of “entrepreneurial cooperative” service where older Kansans could use their skills to help neighbors do tasks they are no longer able to do. Things like heavy cleaning, handy-man tasks, yard work. We know that many frail or vulnerable older Kansans—or their families who are caring for them--need help with just these kinds of tasks. We also know and that many older Kansans need flexible work hours and also need money to get by. We know there are young Kansans who could benefit from mentorship with older Kansans in a project like this—and earn some money too! Of course, there are many issues that would need to be resolved before an initiative like this gets off the ground. Yet, this legislation could move many initiatives—including ways to link youth to the values of our older workers--to reality.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today on behalf of H
Julie Govert Walter—785-776-9294

House Economic Development

Attachment 6

March 9, 2006