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SB 446

Written Only

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On behalf of Austin & Ferguson, L.L.C., owner

Chairman Thompson and Members of the Committee, thank you for accepting this testimony opposing SB 446. My name is Angela Ferguson Allard, and I am an immigration attorney, representing many of your neighbors, constituents and owners of businesses in Kansas.

I oppose this bill, and ask that you vote no, because first and foremost, it is xenophobic and is being used to stir up fear of non-white people. This is a country of immigrants, but this is not the first time that lawmakers have attempted to exclude those who are newcomers to America. You might recall from history courses that Benjamin Franklin was one of the original American xenophobes, claiming that immigrants were endangering New England's whiteness. He said: "[T]he Spaniards, Italians, French, Russians and Swedes, are generally of what we call a swarthy Complexion; as are the Germans also, the Saxons only excepted." That list would encompass some of your ancestors, I would imagine.

My immigrant clients come to the U.S. for the American dream, just like most of your ancestors did. Current immigrants are not coming to steal land from Native Americans, but to invest and build a life, contribute and raise families, and pay taxes. This proposed bill clearly lets them know that they are not welcome to invest in Kansas; that their contributions and taxes are not wanted or needed here. Their farming skills and cultural differences are not welcome by the supporters of this bill. As a native Kansan, I find that message and this xenophobia unnecessary, and frankly, very-short-sighted. All you have to do is study history and look around you to see that immigrants have contributed greatly to our Kansas communities.

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to share my thoughts and I hope that each member of this committee votes no on the passage of SB 446. Thank you.