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Date: February 12, 2025

Re: HB 2174 - Written Proponent

To: House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources, Chairman Rahjes

From: Wendee Grady, Kansas Farm Bureau

Chairman Rahjes and members of the Committee, I appreciate the opportunity to provide written proponent testimony on HB 2174. My name is Wendee Grady, and I am submitting this testimony on behalf of Kansas Farm Bureau (KFB) members. KFB is the state's largest general farm organization representing more than 30,000 farm and ranch families through our 105 county Farm Bureau Associations.

KFB has numerous policies that support rural revitalization and renewal, and attracting persons and entrepreneurs to rural Kansas. KFB's mission is to strengthen agriculture and the lives of Kansans through advocacy, education and service. As part of our efforts to fulfill that mission, KFB created a Legal Foundation 25 years ago to provide education and legal advocacy for our members. Through the Legal Foundation's member engagement, we learned of the important issue of the lack of qualified attorneys in rural Kansas and responded by creating our own Rural Law Practice Grant. We select up to 3 recipients each year for the \$16,500 grant that is paid out in 3 installments. In the program's 4 years, KFB has named 12 grant recipients, and committed \$198,000 in grant assistance to new attorneys to begin their practice in 11 different rural Kansas counties. While we are proud to have taken the initiative to create our own grant program, we recognize that more needs to be done to help attract attorneys to work in rural Kansas.

The State of Kansas supports other professions (e.g. veterinary and medical) working in rural Kansas, and we find great importance in supporting rural attorneys, as well. Besides having the potential to impact more individuals than our grant currently does, HB 2174 would establish law school training for students planning to practice in rural Kansas. We have found the similar program at Kansas State University for veterinary students has been very helpful in training rural vets – not only in the types of cases they will see in their practice, but also with business training because they recognize that many rural veterinarians will own their practice someday. HB 2174 would also provide funding opportunities for rural attorneys who may not be recent law school graduates. This would help fill a need that we have heard about since creating our Rural Law Practice Grant.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony and we hope that you support HB 2174.