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Campaign Manager for New Frontiers  
Written Opponent Testimony of HB 2290  
For the House Commerce, Labor, and Economic Development Committee

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Chair Tarwater and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. My name is Alejandro Rangel-Lopez from Dodge City, and I am speaking to you today as the Campaign Manager of New Frontiers. We're a southwest Kansas based project of the nonpartisan, nonprofit organization Loud Light Civic Action. New Frontiers' mission is to empower young southwest Kansans through the values of dignity, belonging, and freedom. I'm here representing over 500 Kansans who have signed on to this project. Although HB 2290's intent in protecting Kansans from threats from abroad may be worth looking at, I believe that this bill as written will do more harm than good to folks who choose to call our state their home and we urge you to oppose the passage of this legislation.

I come from a family of immigrants, both of my parents arrived in southwest Kansas in the mid-1990s to work at the beef packing plants and have called that region of our state home for the last three decades. Our story isn't unique, there are thousands of families like mine from all corners of the world choosing Kansas as the place to raise their children and are actively building a future for themselves that they can be proud of. From supporting one's own family, raising kids who will (thankfully) never have to go through the hardships you once went through thousands of miles away, to owning your own home, there are a multitude of challenges that come with immigrating to a new country. We often give this struggle the name of the "American dream". This dream often doesn't become reality until you reach that last milestone; having a home you can call your own. This one, most important aspect of what we all collectively aspire towards is the one that drove my parents to come here in the first place and, if we look far enough in our family trees, I'm sure most if not all of us in this room can relate to this struggle.

At face value, HB 2290 appears to be a bill that seeks to ensure Kansas land remains out of the hands of bad actors from countries other than the United States. In the age we live in, protecting Kansans from foreign threats is an issue worth taking seriously. However, once we take a closer look at this bill, it's clear that it achieves much more than it sets out to do. As it currently stands, HB 2290 establishes a far-reaching mandate for the state land council to determine who is eligible for exemptions from this legislation which leaves open the door for misuse of government power whenever it is politically convenient. With no restrictions or guidelines on how this body makes those determinations, what we see behind that door is frightening.

We don't have to look too far to see how this legislation could be used to discriminate against the very folks Kansas so desperately needs to maintain a strong economy and ensure a vibrant future. From Executive Order 9066 that forced over 100,000 Japanese-Americans out of their homes during World War II to historic redlining which continues to impact the ability of Black Americans to own homes today, the

impact of discrimination when it comes to property rights has left a mark on our nation's complex history. While I only named a couple examples, it should be clear that our storied past is one we should learn from, not repeat. We now know that broad bills like HB 2290 **will** lead to unintended consequences and that any legislation seeking to restrict land ownership based on citizenship should be as narrow and clear in focus as possible.

As previously mentioned, I come from southwest Kansas which has one of the highest foreign-born populations in the state. Like my own family, these are folks who want nothing more than to provide a better life for their children where their rights are respected and they have the opportunity to thrive. The American dream isn't complete until you own your own home. We all know this and work towards it in our careers as young people, and to maintain this dream as we grow older. I'm not trying to minimize the importance of national security however, I ask you to be intentional with HB 2290 and really look at the impacts it may have on families like my own whose only wish is to find a patch of prairie they can call their own to rest on.

In summary, HB 2290 is a bill that will have far reaching consequences that impact the folks we need the most in our rural communities. This bill creates a legal pathway for state-sanctioned discrimination against non-citizens who have nothing to do with the actions of the government from their own countries. I urge you to vote against the passage of HB 2290 and work to create a state where opportunity is open to all. Thank you for your time and I hope you take my testimony into consideration.