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PUBLIC POLICY STATEMENT

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Re: SUB FOR SB 393; Career and Technical Education

March 6, 2012
Topeka, Kansas
Testimony provided by:
Harry A. Watts
KFB Governmental Relations

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to present written testimony regarding Sub for SB 393, regarding Career and Technical Education. I am Harry A. Watts, Director-Governmental Relations, Kansas Farm Bureau.

Kansas Farm Bureau has encouraged the development of agricultural education and has assisted school districts across the state in implementing these programs in the classroom. And, our members, like all other Kansas residents, have financially supported elementary and secondary schools through a mix of income, sales, and property taxes.

Our member-adopted policy supports continuation of current funding levels; therefore, we are pleased with the bill as currently written and its emphasis on agricultural education. Vocational education dollars provide critical skills to both rural and urban students who benefit by being better equipped to enter the workforce after graduation.

Agricultural education programs are unique in that they do not offer traditional industrial certification. SB 393 would address this omission by bringing together agricultural education proponents from across the educational spectrum to look at ways to certify existing and future ag-ed programs in high-need sectors or to prepare students for enhanced agricultural careers. We believe the certification opportunities offered in SB 393 will increase the number and value of agriculturally-related jobs in Kansas.

Kansas is becoming well positioned to attract business and industry. Our ability to offer a qualified work force is one of several factors that will attract new business to our state, especially to rural areas, where the need for revitalization is great. Vocational education and certification programs can provide these workers and create opportunities for partnerships between agriculture, business, and labor that will strengthen the commitment between schools and their communities across the state.

Kansas Farm Bureau stands ready to assist as you deliberate on this important issue.