

# State of Kansas

## Senate Chamber



TOM HOLLAND  
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## COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

RANKING MINORITY MEMBER: ASSESSMENT AND TAXATION  
COMMERCE  
MEMBER: FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND INSURANCE  
INTERSTATE COOPERATION  
JOINT COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT  
JOINT COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

February 8th, 2012

Chairwoman Wagle and Committee Members:

Good morning! My name is Tom Holland and I am the State Senator for the Kansas Senate 3rd District serving portions of Douglas and Leavenworth counties and all of Jefferson County. I am here today to ask for your support of Senate Bill 295, the "Fair Consideration of the Unemployed Act".

Currently, approximately 12.8 million American workers are unemployed -- a number that excludes those who have given up looking for work. Approximately 6.3 million (49 percent) have been looking for and unable to find a job for at least six months, and the average unemployed worker searches for a job for nine months -- the longest in any recession on record.

Employers of all sizes, staffing agencies and online job posting firms are using recruitment and hiring policies that deny employment to the unemployed—simply because they are not currently working. In other words, at a time when the competition for jobs is extraordinarily intense—with more than nearly five unemployed jobseekers for each new job opening—some businesses and recruitment firms are telling would-be job seekers that they can't get a job unless they already have a job. Phyllis Anderson, a Kansas resident, commented that "For the first time in my life, I have not been able to find a job. I have been in the workforce for over 40 years and have two degrees. I have been actively involved in my search for employment and have taken on temp work when available . . . It is unfair for anyone to say that they will not hire the unemployed as so many people are now unemployed due to downsizing or jobs being moved out of the country, which is no fault of their own."

A strong majority of Americans, like Ms. Anderson, agree that companies should not discriminate against the unemployed. In a national survey by Hart Research Associates, conducted for the National Employment Law Project in June 2011, 90 percent of the respondents described the refusal to consider unemployed job applicants as "very unfair" (80 percent) or "somewhat unfair" (10 percent).

Senate Bill 295 would make it illegal for employers, staffing agencies, and labor unions to post job announcements that discriminate against the unemployed. More importantly, it would make it illegal to refuse to consider or hire the unemployed. The bill would help eliminate the barriers and uphill battles workers face in trying to re-enter the workforce.

New Jersey has made it illegal to use language in job announcements that discriminate against the unemployed, while similar legislation has been introduced in New York, Michigan and Illinois.

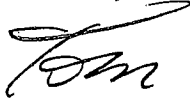
Senate Commerce Committee

Date: February 8, 2011

Attachment 1

I thank you for your thoughtful and considerate deliberation on this urgent matter. With your favorable consideration, SB 295 will send a strong message to unemployed Kansans that their skills and employment history continue to be valued in the workplace.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom", with a stylized flourish above the name.

Tom Holland  
State Senator – 3rd District