

STATE OF KANSAS

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February 15, 2012

Re: Senate Bill 399, The act establishing the Business Workers and Community Partnership Act.

Chairman Brungardt

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee:

I appear before you this morning as a proponent of SB399. The lessons learned by past legislation in other states has precipitated this bill which is a compromise bill with the business community and the pro-immigrant coalition.

Goals outlined in this bill stress the importance establishing a legal process for Illegal immigrants to work in jobs that are deemed of critical importance for the state of Kansas and business leaders in these labor areas. As noted in the bill, the Secretary of Labor shall certify industries as having significant worker shortages that threaten local economies, such as communities in Western

Kansas for example, that can be eligible for this program. Likewise the bill outlines a process of establishing how an immigrant can be able to obtain legal permission to work in the program for these industries that need laborers and how in the future, these aliens would be able to be eligible for a drivers license or non drivers identification upon meeting the requirements that the program lays out. This program is not only limited to business industries, but is also open to community or faith-based organizations that provide English language programs, education and outreach program participation, and assisting undocumented aliens who are program participants in the completion of documentation.

The positive impact of this legislation will not ^{only} affect the workers but the families as well. The economic impact of this demographic has been shown to either improve or devastate local communities and businesses. These immigrants will also be able to work toward English proficiency and be a more viable part of the State of Kansas and the United States as a whole. We can be the positive example of what good conversation and compromise can serve.

Thank you for allowing me to testify this morning.

Louis E. Ruiz

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