



KANSAS

State Building and Construction Trades Council

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TESTIMONY HB 2023 COMMERCE, LABOR, & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE JANUARY 23, 2013

Chairman Kleeb and members of the committee. My name is Richard Taylor and I represent the Kansas State Building and Construction Trades Council. We appreciate the opportunity to present our testimony in opposition to House Bill 2023 concerning authorized deductions from wages.

The Building Trades are made up of thirteen different craft unions with various skills that are utilized throughout the construction phase of any given project. Our membership total in the state of Kansas is close to 10,000. Each of the 10,000 individuals are members in our organizations by choice. Although we work for private employers, public employees have the same choice.

This bill singles out our most trusted public employees, such as teachers, nurses and firefighters, and denies them the freedom to use payroll deduction to make *voluntary* political donations. And I do emphasize the word voluntary. For an employee to make contributions to any political fund they must first sign an authorization card indicating that they wish to do so and fully understand that the donation will be used to support candidates of any party as they deal with issues important to the group. Any member can freely decide not to sign the authorization card and therefore no deduction will be made. There is no retaliation against the individual, the choice is theirs.

The bill unfairly muzzles the representation of working families, but does nothing about the political influences of corporate special interests. The true purpose of these misleading statements is not to protect workers or the interests of these public employees, but to silence the free speech of working families by unfairly stripping public employees of their First Amendment rights simply because they chose to join a union.

In closing, the Kansas Building Trades and our 10,000 members want to express the importance of this issue of basic freedom and stand opposed to House Bill 2023. Again, thank you for the opportunity to voice our opinion and for your leadership and service to our state.

Respectfully submitted,

Richard L. Taylor
President
Kansas State Building Trades

House Commerce & Economic
Development Committee

Date: 1-23-13

Attachment #: 13