



2/19/2013

House Transportation Committee
Kansas House of Representatives

Testimony in Support of HB 2310
Hearing on February 20, 2013

Mr. Chairman and Members of the House Transportation Committee:

My name is Richard Kelly and I am a new vehicle dealer located in Chanute, Ks. My father founded this dealership in 1961 with the offer from Ford Motor Company to be a standalone Ford Dealer. In 1962, the opportunity to acquire the Lincoln-Mercury franchise came about and he added that to the dealership product representation. In 1965, Ford offered the Heavy Duty Truck franchise that offered the opportunity to sell and service the heavy "over the road" type trucks that deliver goods down our highways everyday. In 1972, my father saw an opportunity to build a brand new facility on Hwy 169, just south of Chanute. The dealership would be the first facility built in the newly proposed industrial park, located just west of Hwy 169.

When you hear the phrase, "Location, Location, Location" it's true to success, because just the move from downtown and onto the highway, resulted in business to double. The dealership enjoyed this success until roughly 1985 when the city of Chanute was bypassed with a new road, that without signs indicating the presence of Chanute, no passerby would every know the town existed. Needless to say that business fell drastically with the new road in place. There was never a thought as to what devastation this bypass would do to business, as all of the city fathers and commissioners thought it was a good thing getting the traffic out from downtown Chanute.

The only opportunity to try and get those travelers to our business was going to be in the form of highway signage. So after much investigation about placing new signage on the highways in Kansas, we found out we were not going to be able to tell those would be customers WHERE WE ARE! Not only do we lose the opportunity to sell to those possible travelers, we can't even tell the "over the road" truck driver, who makes his living in his truck and his delivery services are depended on by so many people, where he can get help if his truck brakes down. We offer service and repairs on Cummins, Caterpillar, and Detroit diesel powered trucks. The truck drivers that go up and down 169 Hwy. don't know we exist, because we can't put any signage on the highways to tell them where we are.



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We are just one example of the many businesses that are affected by the ridiculous Kansas highway signage laws that are tied to Federal funding. It's time for change for the better. Southeast Kansas is dying. Our population is diminishing in our towns.

Please consider allowing regulated signage in areas that are most heavily hit by bypasses.

Thank you very much,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard M. Kelly". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Richard M. Kelly

President

Merle Kelly Ford, Inc.