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Lana Gordon, Interim Secretary

Sam Brownback, Governor

January 30, 2013

Madam Chair and members of the Committee,

Good morning, my name is Lana Gordon and I am honored to be before you today.

I have been serving as Interim Secretary of Labor since September of last year and I would like to take this opportunity to give you an introduction into my background and provide you a summary of our accomplishments at the Department of Labor.

#### LEGISLATIVE SERVICE

As many of you know, I was privileged to serve in the Kansas House of Representatives for twelve years as a state representative from Topeka. My legislative service includes being a member of the House Economic Development Committee for ten years, and I was selected as Chair of that committee for six of those twelve years. I served as a member of the House Commerce and Labor committee for two years, and I was honored to serve on the National Conference of State Legislators Labor and Economic Development Committee as Chair for one year, and Vice-Chair for seven years.

As you can see, my legislative background has given me a valuable perspective on many of the important labor and employment issues facing Kansans.

#### BUSINESS EXPERIENCE

I grew up in Prairie Village, Kansas and I lived in Kansas all of my life except for the two years my husband was in Pharmacy School in Kansas City, Missouri. I grew up in a family business, Goodman Hardware, which helped teach me the value of hard work, meeting payroll and taking care of our employees. I received a BS in Elementary Education from the University of Kansas and I became a third grade teacher. After teaching, I moved to Topeka and my husband went into business with his father operating a local cleaning company, Cardinal Building Services, where I helped operate the business for several years. During that time, I also owned and operated four different retail gift stores. While operating Cardinal Building Services and my gift stores, I learned how to manage employees and day-to-day operations of a small business in Kansas. I ran payroll, managed accounting, and I was in charge of customer service.

My experience with Cardinal Building Services and our gift stores helped reveal to me how difficult it truly is to make a small business in Kansas successful; Successful management of government regulations, taxes, employee relations, business ethics, payroll and customer service. My life after selling our business is another personal, but important, experience that helped prepare me for this position. As you know, the Kansas Department of Labor administers, among other things, unemployment insurance in Kansas. After selling our business, I took on the role of employee and I soon found myself in the same shoes as so many other Kansans. I was terminated and became unemployed. My life in the business community had spanned both ends of the spectrum. I had lived the life of an employer and job creator in Kansas, but now I was in the shoes of so many other Kansans looking for a job in this tough market. Yes, unemployment is down in Kansas, but for those still looking for a job, it is a difficult place to find yourself, and unemployment insurance benefits are a critical safety net along that journey.

Senate Commerce Committee

Date: 1-30-13

Attachment: 1

I have recently been able to stand in the employer's shoes, the employee's shoes and the unemployed worker's shoes. While it was happening, it was not always clear to me, but now I can see that there was true value in all of those experiences, and I feel that they make me uniquely qualified to serve as Secretary of Labor.

#### ACCOMPLISHMENTS AT KDOL

Since my short tenure at KDOL, we have been re-evaluating our business processes, focusing on detecting fraud and abuse, and we are bringing the agency back into compliance with federal regulations. We are working with the Kansas Department of Commerce to help unemployed Kansans find work, and we are working diligently at improving customer service.

There is a lot more to do and I am excited at this opportunity to help build a bridge between Kansas job creators and Kansas job seekers, as well as fine tuning our Worker's Compensation services, Hour and Wage and Employment Standards services and Industrial Safety and Health services.

#### CONCLUSION

Thank you for the opportunity to present my story to you. I look forward to working with you and I now stand for questions.

Sincerely

*Lana Gordon*

Lana Gordon  
Interim Secretary  
Kansas Department of Labor