

**Testimony before House Commerce, Labor &
Economic Development
HB 2325- Enacting Public Employee Bargaining Transparency Act
Presented by Eric Stafford, Vice President of Government Affairs**



Tuesday, February 2, 2016

Mister Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Eric Stafford, Vice President of Government Affairs with the Kansas Chamber of Commerce. On behalf of the Kansas Chamber, I would like to express our support for House Bill 2325.

HB 2325 would subject collective bargaining sessions between a public employer and a union to the Kansas open meetings act, shining light on a process which has historically been closed to the taxpayer. State Legislatures across the country are taking proactive steps to provide additional levels of transparency to the taxpayer. These efforts are often times bipartisan in nature.

In 2014, Colorado voters passed Initiative 124 which required open negotiations for collective bargaining sessions between school boards and any representative of employees. This measure was passed by a 71% to 29% margin.

As stated in a Denver Post editorial, "...That's why a transparent process is needed. To begin with, it would let the public see whether both sides – the board and union – are making reasonable proposals and whether they're willing to compromise." Although Initiative 124 was specific only to school boards, the same argument can and should apply across all levels of government.

In conclusion, House Bill 2325 offers transparency for the taxpayer by allowing an open-door process when their government negotiates with a labor union to ensure the interests of the taxpayer are protected.



The Kansas Chamber, with headquarters in Topeka, is the leading statewide pro-business advocacy group moving Kansas towards becoming the best state in America to do business. The Chamber represents small, medium and large employers all across Kansas.