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Testimony on HB 2648
to
The House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development

By Johnnie Goddard
Interim Secretary
Kansas Department of Corrections
February 15, 2016

The Department of Corrections supports HB 2648. HB 2648 amends K.S.A. 75-5275 and K.S.A. 75-5275a to allow Kansas Correctional Industries to build up to five modular residential homes per year at the Ellsworth Correctional Facility. These homes could be sold to the public, donated to charitable organizations or used for corrections officer housing.

HB 2648 addresses good public policy in three ways. As the Alvarez & Marsal study reported, the Correctional Industry program reduces recidivism from 35% to 18%. In plain language, this reduces the number of crime victims. Secondly, the Ellsworth area has a shortage of low and middle price range homes. This shortage hinders the growth of that area since it is adverse to new families being able to afford housing or helping employees avoid long commutes by moving to Ellsworth. The availability of suitable housing would aid the department in its recruitment and retention of corrections staff. Finally, the A&M report recommended the expansion of the market capabilities of KCI as one of its primary efficiency recommendations.

The department urges favorable consideration of HB 2648.