



February 15, 2016

Chairman Hutton, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the Kansas Building Industry Association (KBIA) in opposition to HB 2618 and HB 2648, related to the Prison Made Goods Act. KBIA is an affiliate of the National Association of Home Builders and with eight local home builder associations and more than 2,000 members across the State of Kansas.

These two bills would expand the existing prison made goods act, albeit in very different ways. In either case KBIA remains fundamentally opposed to putting correctional facility produced, subsidized products in direct competition with private industry. Current law allows the correctional industries program to produce goods and provide services, usually as a key component of a job training or recidivism program, with the sale of these products generally limited to governmental and charitable entities for their personal use.

HB 2618 would remove virtually all the current limitations and allow any and all goods produced by correctional inmates to be sold to any person or business within the state of Kansas. This would place government produced goods in direct, and unfair, competition with the private businesses in Kansas jeopardizing the long term health of the business and their continuing ability to employ local citizens. HB 2648 also introduces this aspect of direct competition, but further expands an existing home building job training program by allowing the Ellsworth correctional facility to construct up to five residences per year for sale to the general public. Once again, this places the home builders in the state in the unenviable position of competing directly for business with government produced housing.

The current job training and skills programs are a key component to reducing future recidivism and we applaud the department for those laudable goals. However, amending a successful program to place the government in direct competition with private industry is not a change that we can support.

Thank you for your consideration and I respectfully ask you to oppose HB 2618 and HB 2648.

Sincerely,

Sean Miller
Kansas Building Industry Association