



**House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development
Testimony in Opposition to HB 2648- Prison Made Goods Act, Manufactured Housing
Presented by Eric Stafford, Vice President of Government Affairs**

Monday, February 15, 2016

Mister Chairman and members of the committee, my name is Eric Stafford, Vice President of Government Affairs for the Kansas Chamber. The Kansas Chamber appreciates the opportunity to testify in opposition to House Bill 2648 which creates an exemption to the prison made goods act related to manufactured housing.

As we state in our testimony on HB 2618, our legislative agenda approved by the Kansas Chamber's board of directors contains an item under our Government Efficiency section which states "Support outsourcing state government functions to the private sector while maintaining needed services and lowering the cost of doing business in Kansas."

While we understand the problems facing Ellsworth after recently meeting with several representatives from their community, we maintain our position opposing efforts by government entities which directly compete with private sector business.

HB 2648 would exempt the Ellsworth area from state law prohibiting corrections programs from maintaining programs which compete with manufactured housing companies with the exception of facilities under 1,000 square feet for use by state agencies.

As the saying goes, allowing an exemption for Ellsworth is the "camel's nose under the tent." If it works for Ellsworth, we would fully expect other communities across the state to seek their own exemption, further eroding a service and sale of products offered by home manufacturers in our state. It is again important to state that we fully support efforts by the department to partner with private sector businesses to train inmates so they can learn valuable and marketable skills allowing them to enter the workforce upon completion of their sentence. But we do not support programs which directly compete with the private sector business community in Kansas.

We respectfully ask for your opposition to House Bill 2648. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to this bill and I am happy to answer any questions.



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.