

March 10, 2016

RE: Written Testimony in SUPPORT of HB2634

Chairman, a member of the committee, my name is Christopher Brunin and I am submitting this written testimony in support of HB2634.

As someone who grew up on a Kansas farm, and the grandson of agriculture professional I see a huge potential for future growth. The farmers are the face of Kansas, and we need to keep agriculture thriving to keep our state strong. As someone who will one day inherit a farm, I want the crops that are grown on my farm to benefit the people of Kansas. I don't want my neighbors to stress about not having the money to afford the input costs it takes to grow crops like corns and soybeans. The farmers extend themselves on credit, and get paid annually with a high amount of risk. With industrial hemp the farmers have the opportunity to have multiple yields per year, and higher profits. I don't like the federal government subsidizing the farmers who grow corn when we have an alternative crop like industrial hemp that can make farmers much more money. Mono-cropping corn and soybeans can be lucrative on a large scale, but are the Kansans getting anything in return? Are the farmers helping their local communities with the crops that are grown? As a kid we never ate the crops we grew on an industrial farming scale. I want to manage a farm in a state where I have the freedom to grow a crop to increase the quality of the land, and the people surrounding it.

I went to college in Kansas, and received a degree in business. I am an entrepreneur who wants the freedom to create a brand and product for a better future for my family and me. With industrial hemp and the potential 25,000 products that can be made I see a bright future as a farm owner. We are in a great place geographically to be the front-runner in this industry. We have the ability to be the main central distribution hub of the hemp industry in the United States of America. Kansas has one of the best climates to grow hemp, and the wild hemp grows very well in this state. When we look at this from a global standpoint, and then we can see that we are the only major industrial nation who doesn't grow Industrial hemp. I can go down to the local grocery store, and buy multiple items made with hemp. It is really surprising that I can buy lotion, shampoo, milk, bread, and cereal made of hemp, but it's illegal for my family to grow it. The sky is limit on the potential for Kansas's farmers, and industrial production. We are talking about a multi-billion dollar industry, and other countries farmers are making all of the profits. I would like to be able to return to the farm, and have the money I make be a representation of how hard I work, and the products I produce. I don't want to be held to what the market says minus the high input costs of farming soybeans. We are in a tough place as a state and some are hurting.

The best thing we can do is creating an industry that will help Kansans thrive in a booming market. This isn't anything new to our country, and when you look through the pages of history some of the greatest Americans grew hemp. George Washington our first president is known for his pro hemp-farming stance. We as farmers will use less water with little to no pesticide use. What that means is less input costs for the farmer and higher profits. The quality of the land will be restored to be better quality with richer nutrients to grow the traditional crops. We have to understand politics needs to be put to the side in order to put the Kansas famers first. We can transform local factories into hemp paper mills, clothing mills, food processing plants and many more. We need jobs in Kansas, and we need the people that have left in recent years to return to obtain a job in a very successful industry. The benefits Kansas's farmers see are endless, and the transformation needed on an agricultural level can start right here in Kansas.

We have the opportunity to be the first movers of our nation in this industry. Yes, in Kentucky and other states can grow industrial hemp, but they don't have the climate and soil that Kansas does. We don't need to wait to see all of the other states prosper from this alternative crop. All we have to do is look at history, science, global markets, and take a look at the products available for you to buy. The Kansas farmers are not getting a fair chance to compete with the rest of the world in this industry. Imagine Kansas's hemp paper and plastic products for sale across the world. Imagine an industrial hemp biofuel more profitable than ethanol. Imagine a building material more durable than steal, and being waterproof. Kansas's farmers will have the ability to create brands, and products that will be sustainable. We don't need foreign oil, paper, or building material sources anymore. We can create a lucrative agricultural industry in this state that supports business growth by passing legislation to legalize industrial hemp, and educating the farmers on the opportunity costs at stake.

I want to thank you for allowing me the opportunity to submit my written testimony in support of HB2634 and ask that this committee pass HB2634 favorably, and I would like to add that Kansas is always going to be home for me. I want my future farm to be planted with a sustainable alternative crop, and have the ability to make a prosperous living growing industrial hemp. If you have any questions or want to talk to me personally my contact info is below and please do not hesitate to contact me.

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