

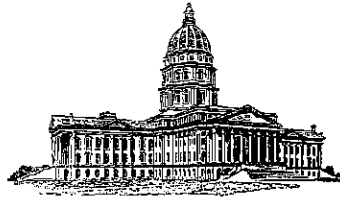
STATE OF KANSAS

JIM KELLY

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TOPEKA

HOUSE OF
REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS
VICE-CHAIR: FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS
MEMBER: HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
PENSIONS & BENEFITS

House Committee on Taxation
Oral Proponent Testimony in Support of
HB 2298 – Removing the Sunset for the Rural Opportunity Zone Program
Wednesday, March 11, 2015

I appear before you this afternoon as a proponent House Bill 2298, the continuation, without a sunset, the Kansas Rural Opportunity Zone program that has proven key in helping many of the 77 participating rural Kansas counties begin to reverse the loss of population they have experienced for over 4 decades. Since joining the program in July of 2014, my 11th District, in Montgomery County, leads the state in applications from new residents. This is certainly a very positive sign for improving the long term viability of a county that experienced two major setbacks in 2014 that led to the loss of over 1,000 jobs.

Only weeks after becoming eligible for the program a major Montgomery County employer used the Rural Opportunity Zone incentives to attract the candidate they wanted for a key position in their local plant from a sister corporation in another state. The individual they were replacing had chosen to live in Oklahoma when she accepted the position; the new position holder is now living in Montgomery County thanks to the Rural Opportunity Zone program.

As a Representative from a new ROZ County I have seen this program immediately generate the results that is was intended to produce. Again, I am a proponent of HB 2298 and urge the permanent continuation of the Rural Opportunity Program. Making ROZ a permanent program will give the 77 participating counties a permanent tool, at a low cost to the county and the state, which they can use on a continuing basis, to encourage new individuals and families to live in rural Kansas.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Kelly". The signature is stylized with a large, looped "J" and a cursive "Kelly".

Jim Kelly
District 11