

Written Testimony

Senate Commerce Committee

RE: Senate Bill 167 - Support
February 18, 2015

Bart Thomas, Owner of Kansas Outdoor Advertising, Manhattan, Kansas

Madame Chairman, members of the Committee. Thank you for allowing me to appear in support of Senate Bill 167.

I own and operate an outdoor advertising business out of Manhattan, Kansas. For the last 52 years, we have been working all over the central part of the state installing advertising on billboards. Myself and my employees are constantly driving and installing billboard advertising. We work from ladders and up high on billboards and obviously there are dangers involved.

I am aware that Constitutional law experts believe that the changes to the workers compensation act using the 6th Edition of the AMA Guides will result in the employers' loss of the exclusive remedy doctrine. If the Kansas Supreme Court finds the Kansas Workers Compensation Act unconstitutional, my company will be subject to lawsuits for my alleged negligence and the negligence of co-employees. We make every effort to be safe, but my work is very dangerous and I am concerned about the potential of one of my employees having an injury because of actions of a co-employee and we always work in teams.

Neither my business nor I can afford the costs associated with lawsuits in civil court. I operate on thin profit margins and volume. One civil court action could put me out of business. While I do budget for workers compensation insurance for my employees, there is no way I can budget let alone pay for a lawsuit for damages or for legal costs associated with civil court.

I have also personally been injured while an employee and want my employees to receive the same protections that I received.

I request you support Senate Bill 167 so businesses like myself can continue doing work in Kansas and protect my employees with workers compensation insurance.