

Testimony IN OPPOSITION to SB 179
Before the Senate Committee on Commerce
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Chairperson Lynn and Members of the Committee:

My name is Majorie Riggin. Thank you for taking the time to listen to our concerns this morning. I am a twenty-year state employee and I urge you to vote against SB 179.

It's important to have a voice in the workplace. I am a member and steward of the Kansas Organization of State Employees (KOSE). The provisions of the agreement bargained between KOSE and the State of Kansas set a framework for insuring both employee rights and employer rights are respected. The provisions of our agreement require the state and the employees to sit down and discuss problems and issues arise. This type of conversation usually helps us reach resolution informally through our grievance procedure. Settling matters this way is far quicker and less expensive than if employee issues all had to be resolved through litigation, which is the only recourse employees would have were this bill passed.

Civil service protections were put in place to prevent state positions from going to those who are owed political favors or do not agree with the views of a political opinion. This bill is designed to undercut employees' civil service protections, as it makes matters of promotion, suspension, demotion, dismissal, layoff, and furlough exclusive management rights (meaning that management may simply decide on and impose these things without defined negotiated process and without employees having any recourse).

Without civil protection for being at the mercy of the state for employment, the employee will go to the private sector for better salary. The employee turnover rate will increase because employees will lose their voice to fix a problem. So, rather than anyone making efforts to improve working relationship and working procedures, employees will simply seek different employment.

If this bill passes, I am an employee that will be vulnerable. Due to budget cuts and region mergers, I was demoted from a supervisor. Because of that change, at no fault of my own, I make over \$5,000 more per year than my peers of the same position. With this bill, in order to "save" money, they could make a management decision to let me go, and I would have no recourse to challenge that decision. Anyone making more than entry-level money should be in fear for their job. This will affect the integrity of programs, by taking away the history and knowledge of the agency because they can.

When dealing with State employees who are part of the Civil Service, the legislature should consider the guiding principles set out in our Civil Service law.

KANSAS CIVIL SERVICE ACT

K.S.A. 75-2925. Purpose of act.

The general purpose of this act is to establish a system of personnel administration that meets the social, economic and program needs of the people of the State of Kansas as these needs now or in the future may be established. This system shall provide means to recruit, select, develop and maintain an effective and responsible workforce and shall include policies and procedures for employee hiring and advancement, training and career development, job classification, salary administration, retirement fringe benefits, discipline, discharge and other related activities. All personnel administration actions regarding employees in the state classified service shall be made without regard to race, national origin or ancestry, religion, political affiliation, or other non-merit factors. Personnel administration actions shall be based on merit principles and fitness to perform the work required and shall provide fair and equal opportunity for public service.

SB179 will remove our protections from fair and equal opportunity for public service, not only by eliminating our ability to bargain our working conditions, but allowing personnel administration to be accomplished by the whim of management and not according to any established rules or procedures.

Please do not remove our voice in State of Kansas employment. We do the work that matters and keep our State running. I am happy to take any questions you may have.