



March 10, 2015

Testimony in Support of SB 212

Chairwoman Lynn and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Americans for Prosperity, thank you for this opportunity to voice our support of SB 212.

Right now in Kansas, taxpayers are being forced to pay for the government to deduct dues from paychecks on behalf of public employee unions, who then use those dues to fund their extensive political advocacy efforts and solicit contributions to political funds among their members, regardless of whether taxpayers support their beliefs.

Americans for Prosperity strongly opposes forcing taxpayers to involuntarily support or be complicit to any form of political advocacy. For that reason, AFP and our thousands of activists in Kansas support SB 212 which would end this unfair practice and instead ask professional employee organization to pay for their own dues deduction from their members.

At its core, paycheck protection is a First Amendment issue. Just as the First Amendment guarantees the freedom to assemble and to petition government for redress of grievances, so too does it guarantee the freedom to abstain from such efforts. Unfortunately, in Kansas taxpayers are forced to pay for the accounting of professional employee organizations, which use the money collected to solicit contributions for political advocacy – advancing views that taxpayers may not support. Taxpayers deserve to be protected from government coercion that compels them to support and subsidize a few select organizations and their chosen political interests.

The status quo unfairly tilts the political playing field. Every other organization that engages in the political process – private unions, corporate PACs, campaigns, parties, and others – must pay for their own accounting. SB 212 simply asks that professional employee unions use their own staff, time, and resources to collect dues and underwrite their own political campaign machinery. Taxpayers are free-thinking citizens, and governments and school districts are public servants – not collection agents or political operatives.

Paycheck protection does not harm bargaining or union rights. SB 212 does not in any way infringe on professional employee organizations' First Amendment right to engage in the political process. It does not change the ability of employee organizations to solicit or spend money for politics through a PAC, and it does not in any way impact workers' collective bargaining rights. It merely ends the practice of using government and taxpayer dollars to benefit private organizations and political activity.

Kansas is “right to work” state in which employees cannot be forced to support a private employee organization or it’s political advocacy. It is time taxpayers be granted that same protection.

Rodger Woods
Kansas Deputy State Director
Americans for Prosperity