

TESTIMONY
Written In Opposition of HB 2483
House Education Committee

By Andy Sanchez, Executive Secretary-Treasurer, KS AFL-CIO
January 24, 2018

Thank you Chairman Aurand and members of the Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to share our views on this important issue of due process for teachers. Hopefully, our opposition to an intriguing HB 2483 will become obvious from the information provided herein.

The Kansas AFL-CIO is based on the basic principles of the hopes and aspirations of working people of this state and country. Our organization and our affiliates are not merely a collective bargaining agent for working men and women, but also to be a voice of opposition to undermining efforts threatening a just and right democracy.

HB 2483 seeks to rectify an injustice to wage-earners (teachers) whom we place our trust with what we value the most, our children. The injustice came when the 2014 Kansas Legislature voted to take away due process rights of teachers. I will not transcribe how the legislative process unfolded to repeal due process except to say legislators were “burning the midnight oil”. It occurred by way of an amendment that went against the framework of our constitutional government and is inconsistent with our institutions and traditions. A job and the workplace is more than just a way to earn our keep. Our careers connect us to others, the school, the community and more. Teaching is a profession and livelihood that deserves to be managed with dignity. If someone is to be dismissed and is going to no longer be able to provide for their family, it is upon us to have a fair remedy and this is due process.

Finally, our contention is that HB 2483 does not go far enough to restore the respect to all teachers, because the bill still leaves teachers hired after the 2014 law out in the cold. The quote the late great Martin Luther King Jr, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere” is well suited in this instance. Again, this is a fundamental right that ought to be afforded any employee sought to be employed in the first place. Our hope is that you will consider modifying HB 2483 to extend this right to all teachers. Thank you.