

KCK Chamber

Testimony opposing HB 2173
The House Federal and State Affairs Committee
Monday, February 6, 2017
The Honorable John Barker Chairman

Good morning Chairman Barker and members of the Committee: My name is Michael Smallwood, serving as Legislative Committee Chairman for the Kansas City Kansas Chamber of Commerce. Thank for the opportunity to express written opposition to this legislation on behalf of the hundreds of small business men and women who comprise the membership of our organization.

Wyandotte County has seen tremendous growth launched in the Village West area, due to the addition of the Kansas Speedway and, more recent, Hollywood Casino. The Chamber supported the gaming bill – Senate Bill 66 – the way it was presented, and did not anticipate changes that would affect the companies that helped launch our community's vision. We feel it is unfair to change the rules for one at the expense of all, as would be the result of HB 2173. This will negatively impact our county for future investment opportunities.

One of the keys to our success has been the development of the Village West area. It began with the Kansas Speedway in 2001, followed by Nebraska Furniture Mart, Cabela's, Legends Outlet, a mixed-used retail area, Sporting Soccer Stadium and the Cerner office facility. This area now employs more than 8,000 employees and hosts more than 10 million annual visitors.

The impact alone from Hollywood Casino has been paramount for the county as a whole. Namely, the economic impact, the vendor business relationships and development from others supporting and doing business with Hollywood Casino. Their community support has also been a proven positive impact in our county.

Development in a community is paramount to its survival. The Chamber and its members would urge you to consider the impact this measure would have on a positive, developmental environment such as what we've seen in Wyandotte County.

It important to note that the horse and greyhound industry, including the current owner of the Woodlands facility, AGREED to the 2007 legislation. They are even said to have had a hand in writing it. Yet ten years later, they still haven't tried to make it work. Instead, year after year, they come to the legislature seeking a tax break.

The development in western Wyandotte County was made possible through strong partnerships between local government, the state and the developers. This has proven to be beneficial to all of the parties involved. Thank you for considering these points and we urge you to oppose HB 2173.

HERE IS A GOOD PLACE TO BE

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