

## **TESTIMONY**

### **Written In Support of SB 285 Senate Ways and Means Committee**

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

Thank you Chairwoman McGinn and members of the Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to share our support on this important issue that could literally mean jobs for the women and men of Kansas. Often transportation jobs are the lifeline for many Kansas families and SB 285 helps to facilitate this job creation.

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, some 75,000 members across the state are eager to work with government and management at every instance to promote economic development. Having a mechanism such as the Task Force being established here in SB 285 that brings labor to the table can only mean dividends for the State of Kansas. Labor puts a lot of value in "input" in the workplace and one reason for that is that it enhances productivity and helps the bottom line in any given industry. Workers can be great partners! In fact, it is imperative in the Building Trade Crafts that are prevalent in highway construction where apprenticeships are managed by both labor and management. Apprenticeships are self-funded and the only thing we sell is the quality and timeliness of the projects. Skills are the priority in this partnership and both management and labor recognize the importance of this in the competitive labor market of construction.

By way of talking about jobs and a new highway program it is also about the Kansas economy. In my 15 years of representing organized labor I have observed that more than ever, people want accountability for their investment. Competition for jobs between states is fierce. At all levels of government much scrutiny is given to whether investments for economic development lives up to that investment. Developers and lawmakers have to assess, is there an available capable and able (trained) workforce. This is especially true where tax dollars are involved, and rightly so. You have a bill (SB 285) that is just that, an investment to help facilitate and strategically plan the future of our highway program. The positive impact of the past two ten-year transportation programs cannot be ignored. SB 285 could be a great tool to insure success.

Our organization is made of union affiliates. A cornerstone of organized labor is having jobs with benefits. Of our affiliates, state transportation programs traditionally employ Laborers, Operating Engineers, Carpenters and Iron Workers in that order of prevalence. Construction, Trades in Transportation has to be in the top industries reported in statewide job losses over the past few years. Kansas businesses missed out because of the job loss and cuts to the highway program. We ask that you support SB 285 as a mechanism to help regain the pride in our state highway program and resume doing our due diligence on infrastructure. It will pay off in the long run. Thank you.