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Date: February 4, 2021

To: Representative Troy Waymaster, Chairman, House Appropriations Committee

From: Shahira Stafford, Kansas Cooperative Council

RE: Proponent Testimony on House Bill 2195

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of the Kansas Cooperative Council (KCC), thank you for the opportunity to support House Bill 2195. The KCC is a statewide association that works on behalf of all types of cooperatively structured businesses in Kansas. The industries organized as cooperatives are vast, including agriculture, utility, financial and insurance.

The majority of the KCC's members are agricultural retail cooperatives that handle grain, fertilizer, agronomy, seed, and fuel operations. Often in rural communities, the local co-op is the largest employer in the town or county. Cooperatives, like other businesses, are responsible for paying unemployment insurance benefits for their employees.

As Kansas continue to deal with fraudulent unemployment insurance claims, the KCC supports legislation that holds the employer harmless in these situations. Identity theft resulting in unemployment insurance fraud is not the fault of the employer or the identity theft victim. In addition, employers should not be held responsible for replenishing the unemployment trust fund as a result of this crisis.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to comment on House Bill 2195, and we respectfully ask for your support.