



February 23, 2021

House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development
Chair, Rep. Sean Tarwater
Vice Chair, Rep. Marty Long
Ranking Minority Member, Rep. Stephanie Clayton

Re: House Bill 2354

House Bill 2354 presents several serious problems for public sector employers.

House Bill 2354 is an unfunded mandate. The bill would put new requirements on employers, requiring us to second-guess the intent of our employees when it comes to choosing payroll deduction for their union dues. We would need to secure and train personnel to handle the confirmations. Beyond that we would need to establish and maintain complex and rigorous data management and record keeping systems to make sure that no employee's choice would inadvertently be missed.

This bill creates the potential for serious legal consequences for employers. In the event that an employee was removed from the union's membership role because of an error - a missed email or a wrong phone number that delayed confirmation, for example - and the employee found themselves in need of union assistance, the employer might face liability for essentially stripping the employee of their union protection. As the employer, we would need to find ways to ensure that no mistakes would be possible and that records of every email sent and received, every phone call answered or not answered, every phone message left for an employee were meticulously kept.

By requiring employers to essentially challenge every employee's decision as part of the verification process, we will be doing severe harm to labor relations in our communities and school districts. We work hard to establish positive working relationships between our unions and our management team. This bill puts management in the position of being required by law to interfere with the free choice of individuals to join their union and pay dues. It makes management the "bad guy" in the relationship.

As a right-to-work state, our employees are not compelled to join a union or pay an fee to a union. We have not seen any evidence of intimidation to compel union membership. Those employees who join the union do so willingly and as managers of our employees - our human resources - we respect their right to this choice by collecting their dues through payroll deduction at their request. This system has worked and worked well for many years. We see no reason to change what is in place now.

I ask this committee to reject House Bill 2354 and let us continue to honor our employee choices as we have done for many years.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brandon Johnson'.

Brandon Johnson
Vice Mayor
City of Wichita

February 23, 2021

House Commerce, Labor, and Economic Development Committee
Chairman Sean Tarwater
Room 346-S
Kansas State Capitol

Chairman Tarwater and Committee Members,

We would like to join the written testimony of Vice-Mayor Brandon Jonson. Vice-Mayor Johnson speaks of the impact that HB 2354 would have on local governments. For that we would like to join his testimony in opposing HB 2354.

Sincerely,

/s/ Brandon Whipple
Dr. Brandon Whipple
Mayor of the City of Wichita

/s/ Mike Taylor
On behalf of the
Unified Government of Wyandotte County/Kansas City, KS

