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Wichita State University, Student from Wichita

For the Committee on Federal and State Affairs March 15, 2022

Hearing on HB2717: Concerning the Prohibition of Local Entities from Preventing the Enforcement of Federal Immigration Laws

Chairman Barker, Vice Chair Arnberger, and Members of the Committee

I appreciate you all giving me the time to testify before the committee today in regard to HB2717. My name is Rija Nazir, and I am a senior at Wichita State University and was born and raised in Wichita, Kansas. I have joined you all today to discuss why voting against HB2717 is imperative for the well being and safety of Kansas residents.

As a child of immigrants and a friend to many who identify as such, I have seen firsthand the obstacles immigrants have faced when trying to create a promising and safe life for themselves and their families. My parents immigrated to Kansas in the 90s from Lahore, Pakistan and have since worked tirelessly to create a solid future for their three kids and the state that had welcomed them with open arms. Without the fearlessness and sacrifices my parents had to make in order to move to Kansas, I would not be standing in front of you all today.

HB2717 could create fearful rhetoric against vulnerable immigration populations that they are not safe in addition to fearing for their lives in a new environment. Although the thought behind this bill may have been to create a more organized immigrant population in Kansas, it will undoubtedly instill hesitance and distrust of law enforcement among all immigrants, documented or not. Instead of resorting to local law enforcement for assistance, residents will see them as their oppressor.

This bill also violates the rights of local communities and government to create regulations that best represent them and their residents. When making decisions from the state level, the interests and asks of particular districts are neglected and create a further distrust in their elected officials and local government. Voters go out and choose who they believe best represents their safety, and that principle should be upheld among their state legislators. I am sure you are aware of how difficult it is to gain and uphold the trust of your constituencies, as well as how detrimental to your work it may be if you lost that trust and support.

I hope you take into consideration the perspectives of the innocent and hard-working Kansans who are doing nothing but providing the best for their families and their

country. They should not fear that they may be punished for doing so. If this bill passes, residents in this state will be stripped of their rights to seek a better life and be protected by our state. Their American Dreams should not become nightmares.

I strongly advise you all to vote against HB2717. I appreciate you for allowing me to testify before you all and hope I may have provided a new perspective for you.