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DOUG BLEX
12TH DISTRICT

Chairman Kerschen and Members of Senate Agricultural and Natural Resources Committee:

Thank you for the privilege of testifying on behalf of HB 2456. My name is Doug Blex, State Representative, House District 12.

I believe HB 2456 will encourage parents and grandparents to purchase a lifetime combination hunting and fishing license for their children and grandchildren. As a long time, wildlife biologist and hunter education instructor, I as well as others, have seen a decline in license sales over the past 20 years. A decline in license sales can be due to a variety of factors, I for one would like young kids to experience the memories of being outdoors and hiking the streams. No doubt, those experiences led me to a lifetime career in conservation. This bill will allow something special from a grand parent or parent to a young child and instill in them the importance of wildlife conservation, fishing and just being outdoors.

A purchase of a lifetime license would allow additional revenue to the Wildlife Conservation Fund for Kansas Wildlife and Parks and provide additional reimbursement of federal conservation funds which is reallocated back to states based upon the number of license buyers in each state. Many children under 5 years of age would not be a big participant in outdoor activities but knowing that they have a lifetime license to participate would be a great incentive to engage in future hunting and fishing activities.

This bill, as written, would be revenue neutral to Kansas Wildlife and Parks and the goal would be to increase overall participation in license sales and outdoor recreation. The Department would have the ability to increase the cost to \$400 in 5 years. The bill is scheduled for a sunset in 10 years to allow all to evaluate the overall success of the program.

Hunter education requirements would not be changed. Currently a young person may hunt without a hunter safety course, if they are in the presence of a licensed person 18 years or older. In order to hunt alone after 16 years of age, they must have taken an approved hunter education course.

I believe this will provide benefits to hunting and fishing participation and preserve a longtime Kansas tradition.

Respectfully,

Doug Blex, State Representative, House District 12