

# International Union of Operating Engineers

AFFILIATED WITH THE AFL-CIO

LOCAL NO. 101

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**To: Senator Rob Olson and Members of the Committee**  
**From: Michael T. Shuey, Business Manager, IUOE Local 101**  
**Re: Testimony in Opposition to SB 177**  
**Date: February 17, 2021**

Dear Kansas Legislator, Chairman Olson & Members of the Committee:

On behalf of the 4700 members of the International Union of Operating Engineers Local 101, many of which have encountered cases of fraud of their Unemployment Insurance accounts paralleled with an extreme frustration of the general filing process. When making strides toward improving and protecting the Kansas Unemployment Insurance System against fraud we must also keep in mind the unwitting affects the changes in this bill will have on the hard-working women and men of our Union. I.U.O.E. Local 101 opposes SB 177 in its current position.

As it is written now, SB177 changes the rates that define the maximum duration of benefits for an unemployed Kansan. This would be disadvantageous to our membership. This change in the duration of benefits would only bring more comfort to mind for the employer rather than to help an unemployed Kansan in an already compromised time while in search for an equitable paying career path. We urge you to take our thoughts and concerns on this issue with vast consideration.

International Union of Operating Engineers Local 101 supports every maximized effort that will counter the level of fraud that the state's unemployment system has endured during this pandemic. SB177 appears to only protect employers that encounter unemployment fraud. We must consider what the workers of Kansas have endured throughout the pandemic as well.

Based on National unemployment statistics Kansas has an incomparable unemployment fraud penalty. Kansas is one of ten states in the country to revoke individual UI benefits for one year or more, ultimately imposing an extreme penalty of (5) years. We urge you to review the (5) year ban as there is nothing described in SB177 excluding or protecting individuals who have fallen victim to fraudulent claims. I.U.O.E. Local 101 supports an amendment removing or reducing the (5) year ban.

Respectfully,

Michael T. Shuey  
Business Manager  
Operating Engineers Local 101