



Goodwill Industries of Kansas, Inc.

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House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development

Written Comments in Favor of HB 2196

by Christopher Stanyer

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Goodwill Industries of Kansas stands in support of House Bill 2196.

The COVID pandemic has been difficult for Kansas businesses and nonprofit organizations. Goodwill Industries of Kansas, a long-standing community-based nonprofit, was forced to temporarily close 18 retail locations statewide and lay off nearly 77% of our total staff. Retail fuels mission, so as such we discontinued mission services to the community such as GED classes and workforce services to individuals with physical and intellectual disabilities. Our story is but one in a chorus that can be heard throughout Kansas. Our Goodwill agency was fortunate to have the resources available at the time to weather the storm, yet other organizations were not so fortunate, and far too many still hang on by a thin thread.

Reassurance and rejuvenation are difficult to come by these days. The process is difficult and opportunities are understandably rare when State government can provide immediately tangible examples of these valuable commodities to its citizens. HB 2196 provides Kansas businesses and nonprofit organizations with this very reassurance with the following:

- Impact-based Unemployment Benefits maximums based on seasonally Adjusted Average employment rates
- Safeguards for investigating fraudulent unemployment claims incurred during the expected impactful period of COVID
- Protection of the 20-year fraud check for reimbursing employer accounts
- Pro-rated unemployment benefits outlined in the proposed “Short-term compensation program”
- Creation of an unemployment compensation modernization and improvement council to ensure relevant, effective, and modern administration of the unemployment compensation system

These efforts, as described in the current form of HB 2196, will allow the above-mentioned reassurance and rejuvenation to a COVID-exhausted population. Kansas businesses and non-profit organizations can move forward with the confidence to focus the entirety of their efforts to organizational survival to the benefit of Kansas communities and our respective state, regional, and local economies.

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