

To: **House Federal and State Affairs COMMITTEE**

RE: In support of HB2113

From: Helen Van Etten, Private citizen, Shawnee County

Date: February 17, 2022

Chairman, Honorable John Barker, Vice Chair, Honorable Tory Arnberger, and distinguished members.

My name is Helen Van Etten.

I appreciate this opportunity to give you some feedback as you consider this House Bill.

I had the honor to serve on the WHITE HOUSE INITIATIVE ON ASIAN AMERICANS AND PACIFIC ISLANDERS (WHIAAPI) under President Trump. In the past decades, AAPIs have experienced historically low unemployment rates; they are the fastest growing immigrant community in the Nation; and their contributions in the sciences, technology innovation, and entrepreneurial spirit continue to strengthen the Nation. We have witnessed first-hand the concerted efforts of the Commission to interact with a diversity of stakeholders, assemble available data, and articulate this set of recommendations to help fully realize the untapped potential of AAPIs. As you have appreciated, the success of AAPIs and other minority groups is vital to the overall success of the U.S. economy and Kansas economy.

As most of the distinguished members on this committee knows that I am not for identity politics, therefore efforts to economically empower AAPIs should be based on principles of equal opportunity and should aim to safeguard the promise of the American Dream for everyone in the United States.

AAPIs would benefit by forming coalitions with other minority groups. Potential partners include members of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and leaders from Black and other ethnicity minority groups who are in search of greater economic empowerment and equal opportunity. The vibrancy and dynamism of the AAPI community has played a key role in shaping American society and its economy. Ultimately, the success of AAPIs and of every other minority group contributes to the overall success of the great state of Kansas, and it is vital to Kansas' interests that the untapped potential of AAPIs be fully realized.

Thank you for receiving my testimony and favorable consideration.