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**TESTIMONY (Written Only) Supporting HB 2808**

**House Federal and State Affairs Committee**

By Andy Sanchez, Executive Secretary-Treasurer

KANSAS AFL-CIO

March 6, 2024

Chairman Carpenter and members of the committee, thank you for this opportunity to share our **SUPPORT** on HB 2808. My name is Andy Sanchez and I have served previously on the Topeka Metropolitan Transit Authority Board (TMTA), now the Topeka Metro, the Long Range Transportation Advisory Committee and a Joint Legislative Transportation Vision Task Force. While it is the work of governing boards to provide direction and advise on transit organization operations to promote a good service with efficiency, too often unrelated factors serve to the detriment of these goals.

Fundamental to the mission of the KS AFL-CIO is working to provide a safe workplace for working Kansans. In the interest of transit workers specifically, we know that bus drivers and any number of transit employees who must deal with the public on a daily basis encounter a number of situations that make their job dangerous. With the job comes human interaction where such human behavior can be unpredictable and highly stressful. As a result, drivers face enormous responsibility to respond quickly, maintain civility, de-escalate a situation all while keeping passengers safe and protecting the general public. All this knowing your behavior and responses are being monitored by camera and could result in you being personally liable for your actions.

The increase of violence in the transit industry extends to verbal abuse, physical assault and numerous other criminal acts. Steps need to be taken to properly employ deterrents to these random acts of violence and it is incumbent upon us to see that this does not continue.

The Kansas AFL-CIO works hard to improve the quality of life for Kansas' workers. We know, as lawmakers you have those same objectives. To ensure that we continue to employ the highest quality of workers to transport our family, friends and loved ones safely, we must hold our expectation of passengers / ridership to a higher standard.

Thank you for your consideration of HB 2808. The KS AFL-CIO wholeheartedly supports HB 2808 as accomplishing this and we respectfully ask for your support.