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Testimony in support of Senate Bill 529
To the Senate Ways and Means Committee
March 14, 2024

Chair Billinger, Vice-chair Claeys, Ranking Member Pettey, and Committee Members:

I am once again speaking in support of creating the Dwayne Peaselee Technical Training Center District Act. This act would create a district that includes all the territory within Douglas County. A bill, HB 2175, to create this act passed in the House on a vote of 122-2 in 2021.

SB 529 is different from the original bill. The change from “shall” to “may” on Page 1, Line 19, gives the authority to the Board of County Commissioner to submit the question but does not require them to do so. Language was added on Page 1, Line 25-30 that set out the specific wording that would be placed on the ballot.

The training center has experienced significant growth and broad support throughout the community since it was established in 2015. The opportunities for skilled workforce training provide career opportunities for many Douglas County residents and provides a great balance to our institutions of higher education. The bill would create a new tax but it would not create additional expenditures; the Peaslee Center has been receiving city and county funding each year since it was established. Approval of the question would make that funding permanent and allow for opportunities for investments and expansion that cannot be budgeted for in a single year.

The Lawrence Chamber of Commerce hosts a legislative priorities meeting before the start of every legislative year. Again, at that meeting this year, representatives of the City, County, School Board, University of Kansas, and the Chamber expressed their support for this measure.

Others are in a better position to answer your questions: I want you to know of my strong support, and of course, as is my habit, offer one suggestion for an amendment:

On Page 1, Line 20, strike “the next” and insert “a”.

Thank you so much for your consideration.

Marci Francisco