



**Testimony on SB 212
Conor Eubanks
Working Kansas Alliance**

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony on behalf of the Working Kansas Alliance, a group of union and non-union organizations representing Kansas workers and their families.

Working Kansas Alliance is opposed to SB 212. In short, we oppose the bill because it is unnecessary, costly, and puts Kansas workers in danger. Moving forward with a statewide OSHA plan would generally have negative consequences for Kansas workers, and the state of Kansas as a whole.

This legislation is extremely costly. The fiscal note attached to SB 212, which we believe is a very conservative estimate, indicates that in FY 2019 it will cost \$2.7 million and then future ongoing expenses to cost the state \$2.4 million. In reality we believe that the annual cost to our state would resemble Iowa's, which is close to \$4 million annually. SB 212's cost to our state when we are facing an ongoing revenue and budget crisis is simply irresponsible and unjust.

We are also worried that this legislation is going to open up the doors to the possibility of privatizing a state run OSHA program. This is theoretically a possibility if this legislation passes.

And finally, we view a state ran OSHA program to be inefficient and ineffective. The United States Government Accountability Office (GAO) conducted a study in 2013 that analyzed state run programs, and their relationship with OSHA. What the GAO found was that many of the state run OSHA programs face a handful challenges. I wanted to share with you a few of their findings:

- “GAO’s survey of the 22 state-run programs that cover private and public sector workplaces showed that turnover was more prevalent among safety inspectors than health inspectors. Nearly half of these states reported that at least 40 percent of their safety inspectors had fewer than 5 years of service. In contrast, half of the states reported that at least 40 percent of their health inspectors had more than 10 years of service. These staffing challenges have limited the capacity of some state-run programs to meet their inspection goals.” (Highlights Page)
- “Filling vacant inspector positions is also difficult due to relatively low state salaries and limited opportunity for salary increases. Officials from state run programs told us that state salaries for inspectors are generally lower compared to

those offered by the private sector or federal government, even though a 1980 OSHA report on state-run program requirements stated that salary levels for state inspectors should be competitive enough to attract and maintain a fully qualified inspection staff.” (Page 10)

- “States’ constrained budgets and human resource policies can also contribute to challenges in recruiting qualified inspectors. OSHA officials in Region 4 told us that constrained state budgets had previously resulted in furloughs in two of the states with state-run programs in their region: Kentucky and Tennessee. OSHA officials in Region 10 also told us that state-wide pay cuts and furloughs have contributed to staffing challenges in the state-run programs in their region: Alaska, Oregon, and Washington” (Page 11)
- “OSHA’s annual reviews of state-run programs show that staffing challenges have limited the capacity of some state-run programs to meet their inspection goals.” (Page 17)

A PDF of the Report Can be found here: <http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/653799.pdf>

I was hoping with these points in mind, and because of these findings, that you do not pass SB 212.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Conor Eubanks
Working Kansas Alliance