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Executive director of Advocates for Immigrant Rights and Reconciliation (AIRR)  
Written opponent testimony of SB 446  
For the Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee

February 7, 2024

Chair Thompson and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. My name is Karla Juarez, and I serve as the executive director of Advocates for Immigrant Rights and Reconciliation. We are a nonprofit organization in Kansas that is dedicated to educating people about the complex immigration system and empowers our immigrant communities to participate civically and provide tools so they can live a self-sufficient life through training.

I am writing to you today strongly opposing SB 446 because it is broadly written and can have unintended consequences in the lives of people coming to the United States pursuing the American Dream.

We understand that national security is a serious matter that should be addressed but laws that restrict our rights in the name of security need to be narrowly written to avoid unintended consequences. A bill like this needs to be specific and clear about who it is seeking to prohibit from buying land in our state to ensure it doesn't have a negative impact on the rights of our immigrant community seeking out the American dream.

I am a Mexican born and naturalized US citizen, I know for a fact that American individuals and businesses can easily own land in Mexico and it is only fair that we be reciprocal.

It took 10 years for me to become a US citizen. Before being eligible to apply for citizenship I held a permanent resident ( Green Card) for 5 years and before that, an employment authorization card for 4 years. Immigrants who are waiting to become citizens should be able to buy land to build their farms or start their own businesses because they intend to stay here forever and make Kansas their home. Kansans value freedom, liberty and prosperity, and this bill will infringe on those values by creating the state land council and adding an extra step to acquire the American Dream.

In summary I am asking that you do not restrict people from buying land in the United States and rewrite this bill so it addresses your actual concern. Thank you for your time and I hope that you take my testimony into consideration.