Senate Committee on Public Health and Welfare
Testimony in Opposition to Senate Bill 391
Presented by William Wilk, Senior Director of Government Affairs

Thursday, February 15, 2024

Madam Chair and members of the committee, my name is William Wilk, Senior Director of Government Affairs for the Kansas Chamber. The Kansas Chamber appreciates the opportunity to submit opponent testimony to Senate Bill 391, a bill related to public health functions.

The main portion of the bill I would like to focus on in my testimony is Section 8 amending K.S.A. 65-129d to read as: *A public or private employer shall not discharge an employee solely because the employee or an immediate family member of the employee is following an isolation or quarantine recommendation from a local health officer or solely because of such employee's vaccination status. In an action against an employer for a violation of this section, the court shall award a prevailing plaintiff the actual damages such person sustained, costs and reasonable attorney fees.*

This again is an unnecessary change to statutes preventing employers from deciding what they believe is best for their employees. Employers do not need any additional burden of government regulation preventing them from working in tandem with their employees to ensure their safety and protection.

For example an employee of a manufacturing company comes to work with the knowledge of being ill, putting the entire company at risk of catching the illness creating a scenario where production could be shut down for a week or even multiple weeks in an already tight supply chain market.

The Kansas Chamber believes in allowing our members to decide what they believe is best for the safety of their employees as individuals and as a united working group.

In closing this an unnecessary piece of legislation that places restrictions on Kansas businesses. Thank you for the opportunity to testify in opposition to Senate Bill 391, and I am happy to answer any questions you might have at the appropriate time.