



**To:** House Committee on Agriculture and Natural Resources, Rep. Ken Rahjes, Chair

**From:** Nick Levendofsky, Executive Director, Kansas Farmers Union

**Date:** February 13, 2025

**RE:** HB2174 — Enacting the attorney training program for rural Kansas act to provide financial assistance to lawyers and law students who practice law in rural areas.

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Chairman Rahjes and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB2174.

Since 1907, Kansas Farmers Union has worked to protect and enhance the economic interests and quality of life for family farmers, ranchers, and our rural communities.

I live in one of the Kansas counties where only one practicing attorney resides. In the past two years, two of the last three practicing attorneys retired and one sold their practice. Not long after selling, the purchasing attorney died unexpectedly, leaving yet another gap to be filled. Soon afterward, a young attorney moved to the community to take over the practice but only lasted a few months before the city lights pulled him away. Our county attorney is also shared with a neighboring county, and the county seat recently had to seek legal counsel from a lawyer who lives just across the state line in Nebraska, but practices in Kansas, as well.

Rural Kansas is in a legal quandary and has been for some time. Many rural Kansas communities have seen the same things I mentioned above happen in their towns and counties for years, but the issue has finally come to a head and must be addressed quickly.

Kansas Farmers Union supports the efforts of the Kansas Rural Justice Initiative and its recommendations to remedy this persistent problem. We especially believe an attorney training program like the one created in HB2174 will greatly benefit rural Kansas towns and counties that have struggled for years to attract quality, young lawyers to do the legal business of farmers, ranchers, businesses, and rural citizens. We have seen the benefits of similar programs that have attracted teachers, doctors, and veterinarians to rural Kansas communities, and we are confident a rural attorney program will do the same.

We stand in full support of HB2174 and ask that you support it with your vote in committee and on the House floor.

Sincerely,

Nick Levendofsky  
Executive Director  
Kansas Farmers Union