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Individual Licensed Teacher  
Written Oral Opponent Testimony HB 2771  
For the House Federal and State Affairs Committee

February 23rd, 2026

Chair Kessler and members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today. My name is Johnny Dunlap II from Spearville, KS (near Dodge City), and I am speaking to you today as a teacher and lifelong Southwest Kansan. I've taught in Garden City and in Dodge City for the past 8 years or so. I am a Debate and Forensics teacher, and I work to inspire young people to learn how to make sound arguments and use their voices effectively. As a born-and-raised southwest Kansan, I have been privileged to witness firsthand the excellent and admirable young Kansans living and thriving in our communities. HB 2771 is part of an ongoing, ever-expanding attempt to villainize people who are simply seeking an equal chance to peacefully raise a family and contribute to making Kansas great. Today, I ask this body to let ICE fight its own battles against Americans, let local governments run their own counties, and make this state a safe and welcoming place for *all* Kansans.

**Immigrant communities will lose faith in local law enforcement.**

My students already have misgivings about the police. This would only discourage their cooperation and reliance on local law enforcement and hinder the sheriff's ability to engage with the community he's elected to protect and serve. Many of my students come from families with a mix of immigration statuses, from born citizens to those with legal status to those working toward citizenship. I'm sure this committee is aware of how challenging it is to gain citizenship if you did not win the cosmic lottery to be born here. If they have need of local law enforcement, they will be reticent to call for help for fear that their cousin, or their neighbor, or someone from their own household will be locked up without due process by ICE. Recent actions by ICE in American cities have only fueled this completely justified fear, and this bill will essentially turn our Sheriff and his deputies into the masked men we see on TV.

**It will negatively impact public safety.**

If immigrants in our communities, regardless of their legal status, are justifiably afraid to call local law enforcement, then crime will increase. If there is no one to help in situations of domestic violence, theft, or a myriad of other situations, then the severity of those situations and the outcomes will become worse. We want local law enforcement to protect and serve, and they can't do so without the community's trust.

**It will be an economic disaster.**

The economy of Southwest Kansas is almost entirely agricultural, with the meat industry as its main focus. We have a high concentration of immigrants because meatpacking plants pay fairly well and offer positions that do not require extensive education or training to start. For the past half-century, Southwest Kansas has welcomed immigrants and their families to fill jobs in these industries, and if those folks leave because we have forced their local government into conscripted service to ICE, the whole economy will collapse.

**Usurps Local Control**

This bill usurps local control from Boards of County Commissioners and dictates how our communities conduct their own affairs, a grotesque overreach that is the very epitome of "big government". It will only lead to enormous costs to Kansans, as local governments will have to foot the bill for ICE, which already has more money (\$85 BILLION for those keeping track) than the US Marines (\$57 billion). It puts

counties at untold risk of liability for the actions of ICE agents in our communities. Kansas is a home rule state, and this violates that principle by forcing local governments to incur costs and liability. Moreover, a sheriff should not be able to unilaterally impose liability on a county without the Board of County Commissioners' review and approval, full stop. That undermines taxpayers and voters in every county and is not within a county sheriff's limited purview.

As previously mentioned, I come from southwest Kansas. I was born in Garden City, went to high school in Dodge City, and reside in Spearville. We have one of the highest concentrations of foreign-born residents in the state. Students in Dodge City High School collectively speak more than 20 different languages at home. We have a community of people who just want to provide a decent life to their families. They came here because they felt Kansas was a place where they could thrive.

Kansas was born out of blood, bravery, and freedom. Our ancestors did not bleed to then bow to the dictates of the federal government. This legislation is the result of fear-mongering and the desire to target vulnerable Kansans. It has no place here.

In summary, HB 2771 will cause immigrant communities to lose faith in local law enforcement, which will lead to less public safety. It will damage the economy and completely usurp local governments. This committee should reject HB 2771 and any other policy that forces Kansans to foot the bill for the most highly-funded law enforcement entity in the country. Thank you for your time, and I hope you consider my testimony. I am available for questions.