



Kansas House Committee on Insurance

Bill Name: HB 2602

Position: Proponent

February 9, 2026

Chairman Sutton and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify.

My name is Patrice Onwuka, and I am the director of the Center for Economic Opportunity at Independent Women. We advance policies that enhance people's freedom, opportunities, and well-being. We have a special focus on women's opportunities and seeking ways to expand their labor force participation.

We are pleased to support House Bill 2602 because it addresses a real gap facing Kansas' independent workforce. **According to the Census Bureau, more than 220,000 Kansans** earn income through independent work. These are people who value flexibility, autonomy, and the ability to shape their own careers, but many lack access to benefits that help provide long-term stability.

This issue is especially important for women. Many women turn to independent work to balance careers with raising children, caring for aging family members, or managing health conditions. The flexibility that comes with freelancing, choosing when, where, how, and for whom to work, allows women to pursue satisfying careers while prioritizing family. [Nine out of ten](#) female workers who moved to independent work say they did so in order to prioritize work flexibility over stability.

Portable benefits help close that gap. They allow benefits to follow the worker, rather than being tied to a single job or employer. In fact, over [80%](#) of self-employed U.S. workers expressed approval of creating a portable benefits fund to help self-employed workers gain access to health insurance and retirement savings. This means independent workers can maintain health coverage even as they move between clients - without giving up the flexibility that drew them to this work in the first place.

Today, legal uncertainty discourages companies from contributing to benefits for independent contractors, even when both parties want that option. HB 2602 provides clarity by establishing a voluntary, worker-owned, third-party-administered framework that protects flexibility while expanding opportunity.

Importantly, **HB2602 does not mandate participation by businesses or workers.** The bill simply gives Kansans more options to design work arrangements that fit their lives.

Portable benefits are a bipartisan, forward looking solution - actively moving in states across the country and we believe HB 2602 positions Kansas to better support its modern workforce.

Independent Women respectfully urges your support of HB 2602. Thank you, and I'm happy to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrice Onwuka', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Patrice Onwuka
Director of the Center for Economic Opportunity
Independent Women