

STATE OF KANSAS
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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DR. MEGAN D. STEELE
51ST DISTRICT

February 11, 2025

Subject: Proponent Testimony for HB2253

To: Honorable Chair Humphries and Judiciary Committee Members

I am writing to express my strong support for HB2253, a critical piece of legislation aimed at addressing the growing issue of livestock theft. This is not just a matter of property loss—it is a direct threat to the livelihoods of hardworking farmers and ranchers across our great state.

Before I ran for office, a close friend of mine experienced firsthand the devastating effects of livestock theft. One morning, he woke up to find that two of his calves and his trailer had been stolen. That trailer was the backbone of his farm, used daily to transport hay, livestock, and supplies. Without it, his operations were severely impacted, forcing him to make difficult adjustments just to keep his farm running. Despite reporting the theft immediately, neither the trailer nor the calves were ever recovered. While law enforcement was able to apprehend the thief, the consequences were minimal—a mere misdemeanor charge. My friend was left to bear the financial burden of replacing stolen equipment, while the criminal walked away with little more than a slap on the wrist.

After this incident, I began paying closer attention and soon realized that my friend's story was far from unique. Farmers and ranchers across our state have faced similar or even worse situations, with many struggling to recover from the financial and emotional toll of these crimes. Livestock theft is not a victimless offense—it disrupts businesses, destabilizes families, and undermines the foundation of our agricultural industry.

HB2253 is a necessary step toward ensuring justice for victims and deterrence for criminals. Strengthening penalties and providing law enforcement with better resources to combat livestock theft will help protect the people who feed our state and nation. I urge you to support this bill and stand with our farmers and ranchers in their fight against this growing threat.

Sincerely,

Representative Steele