

Testimony in Support of HB2201 – Kansas FFA Specialty License Plate

Presented to the Kansas House Transportation Committee

Chairman Francis, Vice Chair Neely, Ranking Member Ballard, and esteemed members of the committee:

My name is Tucker Leck, and I am honored to stand before you today to express my strong support for HB2201, a bill authorizing the creation of a Kansas FFA specialty license plate. I appreciate the opportunity to share not just the facts about this legislation, but the personal story behind why it matters so deeply to me—and to thousands of Kansas FFA members across our state. As the current Neodesha FFA President, former Southeast District Reporter, and a 5x National Gold Medalist in Prepared, Extemporaneous, and Creed Speaking, as well as Swine Entrepreneurship and Production Proficiency Awards, FFA isn't just a part of my story, it is the driving force, the cornerstone, and the foundation that has shaped my identity, fueled my passions, and defined my lifelong journey in leadership and agriculture.

Agriculture isn't just my passion; it's my foundation. My journey in agriculture began not with a grand enterprise, but with a simple, humble start—a small pig named Ivan. I was seven years old when my dad and I welcomed Ivan into our lives. At that age, I didn't understand agricultural policies, economic impacts, or the broader role agriculture plays in our nation's prosperity. But Ivan taught me something even more fundamental: the value of responsibility, hard work, and dedication.

Feeding him early in the mornings, caring for him late into the evenings, and watching him grow instilled in me lessons that have shaped my entire life. What started with one pig evolved into something much greater. Today, I am the herd manager of Leck Family Showpigs, an operation that produces over 100 high-quality show pigs annually, serving 4-H and FFA members across the country.

This story mirrors the story of agriculture itself. From small beginnings—whether it's a single pig, a single seed, or a single student—extraordinary things can grow. But growth doesn't happen in isolation. It requires support systems, mentorship, and organizations like the National FFA that provide the tools and opportunities young people need to thrive.

That's why HB2201 matters.

This bill isn't just about a specialty license plate. It's about visibility, support, and sustainability for an organization that has been instrumental in shaping future leaders—leaders not just in agriculture, but in business, science, education, and public service.

Kansas FFA currently has 13,641 members across 232 chapters in 103 counties. In the past decade, membership has surged by more than 30%. That growth is a testament to the relevance and impact of agricultural education in today's world. But with that growth comes

increased demand for resources—resources that our operational budget has struggled to keep pace with.

The revenue generated from this specialty plate will provide much-needed funding to support FFA's mission: developing leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education. This funding will enhance scholarships, leadership development programs, and local chapter activities—investments that directly impact students like me.

But beyond the financial aspect, this license plate serves another critical purpose: awareness.

Imagine driving down a Kansas highway and seeing that iconic FFA emblem displayed proudly on a license plate. It sparks conversations. It fosters pride. It reminds people—whether they live in rural towns or urban centers—that agriculture is the backbone of our state's economy and identity.

Agriculture isn't just what we do; it's who we are. It generates billions of dollars in revenue, sustains thousands of jobs, and ensures our food security. But none of that is possible without a skilled, passionate workforce—and that's where FFA comes in.

Through FFA, I've had opportunities that have shaped my life far beyond the farm. I've competed on state and national teams, addressed agricultural issues on national stages, and even discussed topics like the role of U.S. wheat exports in global diplomacy. FFA didn't just teach me about agriculture; it taught me leadership, public speaking, critical thinking, and advocacy.

These are skills I will carry with me as I pursue my education in political science at the University of Notre Dame, with the goal of bridging the gap between agriculture and policy. One day, I hope to return to Kansas—not just as a farmer, but as a public servant dedicated to championing the values that make our state strong.

HB2201 isn't just a bill; it's an investment.

It's an investment in the future of Kansas agriculture, in the young leaders who will shape our economy, and in the legacy of stewardship that defines our state. It encourages both rural and urban Kansans to engage with and support agriculture—because whether you live in a small farming community or a bustling city, agriculture impacts us all.

In closing, I urge you to support HB2201. This license plate represents more than just metal and paint. It symbolizes pride in Kansas's agricultural heritage, support for the next generation of leaders, and a commitment to the future of our state.

Thank you for your time, your consideration, and your support of Kansas FFA and agricultural education. I'd be happy to answer any questions.