



Chair Alley, and Members of the Committee,

We appreciate this opportunity to submit **proponent testimony for SB 229**, which establishes a process for the automatic termination and legislative review of occupational licensing requirements in Kansas, requiring periodic renewal and approval for new licenses, with specific exclusions for certain healthcare boards. We hold the following position on SB 229:

1. Occupational Licensing Can Be An Unnecessary Barrier to Employment and Economic Growth.
2. SB 229 Will Make Licensing Requirements More Accountable and Transparent.
3. SB 229 Spurs Economic Mobility and Job Creation.

Occupational licensing often places excessive burdens on workers without meaningfully improving public safety.

- Research by the Institute for Justice finds that Kansas requires a license for 67 low- to moderate-income occupations, costing workers an average of \$198 in fees, 234 days of training, and passing two exams just to get started.¹
- A study by the Obama Administration’s Council of Economic Advisers estimated that occupational licensing restrictions reduce employment by 2.8 million jobs nationally, costing consumers \$203 billion annually.²

In Kansas, these barriers disproportionately affect low-income individuals, military spouses, and people of color, limiting access to opportunity and stifling entrepreneurship.

SB 229 Will Make Licensing Requirements More Accountable and Transparent.

A structured review process, as outlined in Senate Bill 229, will ensure that licenses are necessary and remain the least restrictive means to achieve public safety.

Sunset reviews have been highly successful in other states. Colorado’s Office of Policy, Research, and Regulatory Reform, for example, eliminated or reformed several licensing requirements after finding they were overly burdensome or unnecessary.³

¹ Institute for Justice, *License to Work; A National Study of Burdens from Occupational Licensing*, November 29, 2022, <https://ij.org/report/license-to-work-3/>

² The Department of the Treasury Office of Economic Policy, the White House Council of Economic Advisers, the Department of Labor, *Occupational Licensing: A Framework for Policymakers*, July 2015, https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/licensing_report_final_nonembargo.pdf

³ Colorado Department of Regulatory Agencies – Office of Policy, Research and Regulatory Reform, *Colorado 2024 Sunset Reviews Released*, <https://dora.colorado.gov/press-release/colorado-2024-sunset-reviews-released>

Kansas can expect similar results by conducting periodic reviews to determine whether less restrictive alternatives—such as voluntary certification—could achieve the same outcomes without limiting entry into professions.

We believe regular sunset reviews should be put in to place to assess the necessity and effectiveness of existing licensing laws. This will ensure that regulations keep pace with market demands and do not impose unnecessary burdens on workers.

The bill's focus on reviewing job impacts, compliance costs, and multi-state comparisons ensures Kansas licenses will be justified based on evidence rather than inertia.

SB 229 Spurs Economic Mobility and Job Creation.

Occupational licensing reform is a proven strategy for boosting employment and economic growth.

- States that have reduced or streamlined licensing requirements have seen significant gains. Arizona's universal recognition law resulted in more than 4,000 new licenses issued in its first year, helping professionals move and work more efficiently.⁴
- A report by the Brookings Institution found that reducing licensing barriers could increase job growth by as much as 1.8% annually.⁵

By embracing these reforms, Kansas will encourage entrepreneurship, fill workforce gaps, and attract talented professionals nationwide.

For these reasons, we urge the committee to pass SB 229 with our recommendations and suggestions.

⁴ Goldwater Institute, *Breaking Down Barriers to Work with Universal Recognition: Frequently Asked Questions*, March 2022, <https://www.goldwaterinstitute.org/universalrecognition/>

⁵ Brookings Institution, *Occupational Licensing and American Workers*, June 21, 2016, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/occupational-licensing-and-the-american-worker/>