

Testimony of Christie Bauerle

Opponent-Senate Bill 256

To: Senate Government Efficiency Committee

Chairperson Erickson and Members of the Committee

My name is Christie Bauerle. I have been working in the Kansas Protection Report Center, "PRC", since April 14, 2014. I would like to express my thoughts and concerns regarding Senate Bill 256 for your consideration in sending all State Employees back to the office for work. While I understand the importance to have efficiency and accountability, I feel, we at PRC could be exempt from that status for a number of reasons.

1) The State of Kansas spent a lot of money to get equipment set up for us to complete our essential work at home to answer calls 24/7 when COVID hit. We take calls from all over the United States for child and adult abuse.

2) I have heard PRC is almost fully staffed for the first time due to being able to open up positions to people who are not just in the 3 State Buildings in Topeka, Kansas City and Wichita. PRC staff are working 24/7, which requires a lot of people working different hours in the day and night. Being able to fill staff positions with others who live outside of those work stations, has helped PRC to get more workers on board and trained. We can't afford to lose staff who may say it is not worth driving every day to the work station they are assigned to. Our timeliness and meeting deadlines require a full staff. The unit I am assigned to has people from all over the State of Kansas and Missouri, none of which live in Topeka our assigned building.

3) I was informed that our timeliness rate on reports has improved to 98% because we are getting fully staffed with people working for us who live in other cities and states.

4) I am required to work 3 holidays a year, weekends, and often put in overtime to cover others shifts and when the work is really high or people need to be away from their work schedule. Being able to work from home, means that others can fill in when someone is sick, or has a last-minute appointment, emergency, or obligation for their family. There is no wasted time in traveling to the State Office Building.

5) I don't get extra pay to work 24/7. When other state employees are off work and get a "free day of pay" when the weather is too dangerous for travel, we are required to be at work during our shift or take a personal leave day. Others don't have to take leave. Working from home, means we don't have to risk our lives to drive to the state building we are assigned to when it is "not safe" for anyone to be driving. We want to be around for our families too, not in a wreck because we had to go into the office.

6) The older I get, the less travel in the dark hours of the day the better. Working from home eliminates that issue. Working from home has kept me interested in continuing to work for the State providing essential service.

7) Working from home also helps alleviate some of the road congestion on streets and highways that are closed for repair for months at a time. Also, less wear and tear on my vehicle from pot holes and potential accidents caused by the construction and people in too much of a hurry.

8) Working from home does not make me feel like I am having to work to put gas in my car, just to go to work. Like those that have to put their children in daycare just to work, then fork out all the money to have the child in daycare.

9) Due to working at home, I believe there is likely a reduced number of supplies being asked for by staff like paper, locks and keys, staples, paperclips, paper towels, toilet paper, Kleenex, calendars, and other items as I supply myself with those items without reimbursement from the State of Kansas.

10) Since I have equipment at home that can provide meetings, conferences, and trainings I would expect there has been a reduction in requested reimbursement requests for travel, food and lodging. The equipment we have at our home means we can have our meeting/training, and then get back to work without losing the rest of the day in travel time.

11) Working from home is safe too. As I remember being in the office when protests are happening and the protestors are walking past our building, it was hard to concentrate knowing there might be a security issue in the building when the protests were happening. It is hard to concentrate when those things are going on.

Thank you for your work, your time and consideration.

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