

SB256 Proponent Written Only Testimony

Chairwoman Erickson and members of the committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB256. As we look at the makeup of our state workforce, it's important to acknowledge that Kansas has a relatively high number of government employees—681.6 per 10,000 residents, which is above the national average. This means we have a lot of people working in state government, and we need to ensure that they are working as efficiently and effectively as possible.

One of the most straightforward ways to do this is by bringing employees back to the office. In-person work helps ensure accountability. It's easier to track performance, foster teamwork, and ensure that employees are fully engaged in their roles when they're physically present. We all know how hard it can be to stay focused and connected when working remotely. Returning to the office provides the structure needed to ensure that everyone is doing their part to serve Kansans.

Additionally, requiring employees to be in the office helps ensure that taxpayer dollars are being spent effectively. With so many government employees in the state, it's crucial that we avoid inefficiency. The bill includes provisions for exceptions—employees with nonstandard hours or roles that require flexibility—so it's not a one-size-fits-all approach. However, for most employees, returning to the office is simply the best way to get the job done.

Another important point is that this bill requires state agencies to report on the number of exceptions granted. This creates transparency and ensures that any deviations from the norm are well-documented and justified, which I believe is important for both lawmakers and the public.

In closing, bringing employees back to the office will improve productivity, collaboration, and morale—ultimately leading to better services for the people of Kansas. With such a large workforce, we can't afford to let things slip through the cracks. This bill gives us a practical way to ensure that state employees are working efficiently and effectively for the benefit of all Kansans.

Respectfully submitted,

Kari Sue
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Sedgwick County Precinct Committeewoman