
Oral, Proponent Testimony for HB 2342
Rachel Willis, Director of Legislative Affairs, Kansas Department of Commerce
Senate Judiciary Committee
March 11, 2025, 10:30 a.m. Room 346 S

Thank you for allowing us to testify in support of HB 2342. The bill provides the Secretary of Commerce the authority to conduct national criminal history background checks for final applicants and current employees in specific positions within the agency. The bill allows the Secretary to request these checks through the Kansas Bureau of Investigation (KBI) and use the results to determine an applicant or employee's qualifications and fitness for the position.

HB 2342 establishes standards and defines which specific positions national criminal history background checks would be allowed. These sensitive positions include division directors, assistant secretaries, deputy secretaries, IT managers, chief counsel, grant or loan program managers and any position that the Secretary determines involves significant financial management responsibilities or access to confidential information. These national criminal history background checks will only be required for those individuals who are deemed a final applicant. A final applicant is a person in a select group of applicants that are the most qualified for the sensitive position and whom the Secretary intends to give final consideration for employment. This new step in the hiring process will mitigate legal risks, ensure safety and security, protect the state and ultimately promote a positive work environment.

Implementing criminal history background checks is a necessary and responsible step to safeguard Kansas communities and other Commerce partners as well as maintain the integrity of the agency as we continue to work to grow the state's economy. It will protect both the state as the employer and employees, promote fairness in hiring and reduce the potential for future risk. Through background checks, we will ensure that Commerce is a safe, reliable and secure place.

Commerce requests your support of HB 2342.