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HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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DR. KIRK HASKINS
53RD DISTRICT

Proponent Testimony for HB 2617
Kansas House Elections Committee
Thursday, February 29, 2024

Chairman Proctor, Vice Chairman Waggoner, Ranking Member Woodard, and esteemed members of the committee,

On behalf of HD 53, I appreciate the chance to advocate for HB 2617 - legislation crucial to maintaining the integrity of our government.

This bill reflects our commitment to transparency and accountability in our political process. At its core, HB 2617 addresses a persistent issue within our political system: conflicts of interest among legislators. The undue influence of special interests undermines public trust and erodes the foundations of democracy. By preventing legislators from voting on matters where they or their immediate family members have a vested interest, this legislation aims to curb corruption and ensure that decisions are made solely for the benefit of all Kansans.

Moreover, the proposed amendments to existing statutes reinforce the importance of compliance and accountability. Granting the governmental ethics commission the authority to levy civil fines for violations sends a clear message that unethical behavior will not be tolerated.

During my tenure in the House, I've witnessed instances where conflicts of interest were not adequately addressed by my colleagues. These occurrences underscore the urgent need for robust ethics legislation to safeguard the integrity of our legislative process and restore public trust in our government.

While some may argue that such measures are unnecessary or overly restrictive, I firmly believe that the benefits far outweigh any perceived drawbacks. I urge the committee to vote favorably on HB 2617.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Kirk Haskins', written in a cursive style.

Kirk Haskins, EdD
Representative – HD 53