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TORY MARIE BLEW
112TH DISTRICT

Chairman Carpenter, and members of the Federal and State Affairs Committee,

This morning I'd like to express my support for HB2059 and how the passage would greatly benefit not only the 112th district but all common consumption districts within the State of Kansas.

In 2021, Great Bend Alive created a common consumption district downtown, Final Fridays on Forest, and ever since their first event it has been a huge success. Imagine being downtown, beautiful weather, listening to live music, a variety of food vendors from one end of the street to the other, and on average 400-600 people on one blocked off street. At the first event a local artist performed a live painting and then auctioned it off at the end of the night. I can assure you many of us were bidding on the beautiful painting of Cheyenne Bottoms! This all sounds wonderful, but the ability to expand is limited under current law where streets must be blocked off wherever the district is located.

I have enjoyed working with the Great Bend Alive Executive Director over these past two years to learn more about the planning that goes into this event each month, how they plan to expand and what hurdles they are currently facing. By changing the statute, this allows the district to grow, help other businesses downtown to be a part of Final Fridays on Forest, the community members who attend can now travel from one area to another with a drink in their hand, and this allows rural communities the opportunities to feel like they are in an urban community feel while being in their own hometown.

When asked, "What is our community missing?", many community members always venture off to their experience at the Power and Light District, or other urban-like areas that have many restaurants, bars and live music. This is one of the driving focuses our community has for the Quality-of-Life component that some feel we were lacking. By passing HB 2059 I can assure you this would help our downtown tremendously.

In conclusion, first, I want to invite you all to one of the Great Bend Alive events downtown, it's always the 'Final Friday' and it is on Forest St. between Main and Williams. I'm always amazed by the turnout our community has for this event each month. Second, I ask for your support on HB 2059.

Thank you for your time and I'll stand for questions at the appropriate time.

Kansas Proud,

Tory Marie

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