



TO: SENATE FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND INSURANCE COMMITTEE
Sen. Jeff Longbine, Chairman

FROM: KANSAS ORGANIZATION OF STATE EMPLOYEES (KOSE)
Sarah LaFrenz, President

RE: TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF HB 2198

DATE: March 8, 2023

Chairman Longbine and Members of the Senate Financial Institutions and Insurance Committee:

As President of the Kansas Organization of State Employees (KOSE), I appreciate the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2198, which would move certain law enforcement officers and employees within the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks from regular KPERS and into the Kansas Police and Firemen's Retirement System (KP&F). We believe it is important to allow law enforcement professionals who provide important service in order to keep our citizens and communities safe appropriate retirement benefit opportunities.

As the Legislature considers HB 2198, KOSE respectfully requests you also give due consideration to also include moving State Corrections Officers from regular KPERS into KP&F. Either as part of this bill or as a separate piece of legislation as outlined in 2023 House Bill 2008 sponsored by Representatives Proctor, Buehler, Johnson, Neelly and Resman. Our Corrections Officers do a fine job of making the state prison facilities operate in a professional manner under very trying circumstances working long hours for little pay. As testimony of related bills proposed in recent sessions have, the Department and its' employees are operating under extremely difficult conditions. Providing this enhanced retirement benefit would go a long way to improving morale and retaining good employees.

The idea of moving State Corrections Officers into KP&F is long-overdue. It has been considered in various forms in the past. As you may recall, during the 2018 Kansas Legislative Session, the Kansas House of Representatives on several occasions advanced the concept over to the Senate. The bill, sponsored by the late-Rep. Russ Jennings, originally passed the House on February 21, 2018, on a Final Action vote of 113-9. Unfortunately, the measure did not make it to the Governor's desk.

It is also worth mentioning that the 2018 Joint Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice Oversight recommended in its' report to the 2019 Legislature that this change for facility correction officers be made.

With all the above in mind, on behalf of KOSE, I sincerely hope you will consider the merits of moving State Corrections Officers into the KP&F retirement system during the 2023 Legislative Session. I would be happy to provide additional information to the committee upon request.

Thank you very much for your consideration of this testimony.