

My name is Desima Dawdy and I am testifying in support of the Livestock and Ag Community HB 2712.

I was born and raised in Dodge City as was my father, who invested and participated in cattle ranching and sponsorship of the rodeo. My cousin, Doyle Heft, served Kansas as State Branding Inspector. My Mother's family has strong ties to both the XIT Ranch, and the ranching community in Greensburg.. My Grandmother, who was a County Treasury, invested in oil and ranching. My father-in-law was Head of Fisheries for the Fish and Game Commission. My family beats the heart of Kansas.

Growing up in Dodge, I would often complain about the feedlot aroma, and my Dad would always smile and say he loved the smell because that was the smell of money, and how true that statement was. My father's generation understood a hard days work, sweat equity, and the value of a dollar. My Dad, like many other fathers, wanted to use his hard earned money to give his daughters an education and a more comfortable life. Gratefully I joined the exodus out of Dodge, as did most of my peers, who primarily settled in Wichita, Topeka, and Kansas City, or out of state, after college.

During frequent visits back to Dodge, I remember discussions about the financial benefits of feedlots and processing centers being centrally located, and was excited to see Dodge building and growing, in stark contrast to other similar towns. I remember when the call went out for workers and the jobs remained vacant. The economy was good, and everyone wanted steak, but no one wanted the dirty work of killing the cow. I remember when the Vietnamese immigrants came to town then packed up and left because their frames were physically unable to do breaking work. I remember how the Latino community rode in and saved the industry with sweat and determination, seeking a better life for their families, just like my father had. I remember reading and hearing how my childhood neighbor and friend of the family, Pat George, brought Dodge in at the lowest unemployment rate in the state, while boasting one of the highest minority percentages, during a time when other communities were tanking.

Now as a business owner in both Topeka and Lawrence, I fully understand the need for a strong responsible workforce that is willing and ready to work. During a recent remodeling, I had difficulty finding workers who were willing to work nights and weekends so my business could continue to operate during the remodel. Local workers on "lay off" wanted paid cash, which I refused, Many skilled workers did not want to work inconvenient hours, during the Cheif's game, or when the weather was good, or bad. A local master carpenter did shoddy workmanship. I ended up having most of the work done from a subcontractor from Kansas City. All you have to do is read the Sunday Capital Journal Classified Ads and equate the big color ads mean that certain industries are competitively seeking HARD WORKING INDIVIDUALS. They are giving bonuses. They need workers. A young man I advocate for graduated from high school, college, and dentistry school in the U.S. and now we FAIL OUR STATE AND CITIZENS by refusing to extend him a visa to adjust his status to practice dentistry in western Kansas. I also advocate for a college valedictorian with a chemical engineering degree, who also graduated in the U.S. and now our government won't extend her a visa to work in Kansas, while having no problem pouring thousands of taxpayers dollars to try to create a workforce while one is right under our noses.

Legislators need to wake-up and look at the stark reality that a lot of the unemployed are unemployable. They have drug issues, lack education, skills, physical stamina, or have a poor work ethic, or a poorer attitude. As long as it is easier to collect a welfare check, than to bust your tail, we will always have job openings. And for the unemployed that would like to work, you also might want to consider how other states are offering unemployed workers the opportunity to take a "lessor paying job" especially with benefits, and making up the difference, because if you pay them more to stay home than to work, many can't afford to work. On the other hand, in specialized high demand fields such as my business, we can't find qualified applicants. If I can not find a U.S. citizen to work for me, then I should be able to recruit elsewhere without outlandish fees, or miles of red tape. The only thing that prevents many industries from growth is BIG C of prosperity. Please don't lecture me about a "living wage", I pay quality standard minimum wage, and if you think it should be higher, I am not st

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so quit blaming businesses owners for the failure of government. You also might want to factor in the expense it takes to own a business, especially after paying taxes and overhead and then see how much is really left on the plate at the end of the day.

I am even more appalled that out of one side of their mouths, politicians decry "BIG GOVERNMENT" but continue to hamstring businesses by refusing to help resolve work shortage issues facing certain industries. Prior to 1996 most status adjustments could be done within the U.S. by paying a \$1000 fine. By not allowing businesses to access a ready to work force, you are choosing to hamper the growth and development of our state by failing to recognize that immigration reform is not one size fits all. Contrary to popular legend, most of our undocumented community came LEGALLY on visas and could not get their visas renewed within the U.S. or they would lose their jobs, or they brought minors who "timed/aged out" and can not adjust due to short sighted laws. Please notify Rick Santorum that undocumented people who are trying to get their status adjusted DO have a tax payer identification number and do pay and file taxes. Also most do not STEAL IDENTITIES, but work under legal ITIN numbers, or under bogus names and numbers. Many pay social security, sales, and property taxes and are the lifeblood of many communities. Undocumented people do NOT qualify for welfare. What they are experiencing is truly TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION. Pull these people out of your communities like Georgia and Alabama has done, and you will see your coffers drop.

We all want legal immigration, but when we only offer 6% of visas to our neighboring countries, and we have immigration lotteries that fill the spots with immigrants that may not match our workforce needs, we are being foolish. When we give visas, then fail to renew them within the U.S. we are sending revenues right out the door. In reality, many can't afford to leave the country, and others won't risk the safety of their family and the loss of their job to stand in an imaginary line to fill out paperwork. Our immigration system is dysfunctional and needs fixed. The courts have shown mercy to many individuals who have landed in the legal system and escaped the full wrath of the law through youth court, plea bargaining, warnings, diversions, expungements, and probation. Many politicians, including the Kris Kobach Klan, was recently conflicted of election related fraud, So NO "ILLEGAL", for people who can afford a good attorney and wiggle or buy themselves a free pass, does NOT always mean "ILLEGAL ". And if "Illegal is Illegal" why are immigration bills crafted for allowances for illegal behavior of children and grandchildren of legislators who use fake ids, and drink underage? I also thought being undocumented is classified as a civil issue not a criminal issue. If a citizen failed to renew his driver's license would you think it would be fair to never let that citizen drive? If a citizen has a tax issue, should he and his children never be able to work? I wished we held our citizens to the same standards we want to hold our immigrant population to. We claim to be the Bible Belt, but refuse to forgive, refuse to show mercy, and refuse to love our immigrant community with a big log stuck in our eye. We cry out to the sanctity of life, but fail to recognize that the sanctity of does not end at birth. WWJD about Immigration?.

"You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God." Leviticus 19:34

"The people of the land have practiced extortion and committed robbery. They have oppressed the poor and needy, and have extorted from the sojourner without justice." Ezekiel 22:29

"When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong." Leviticus 19:33

"You shall not oppress a sojourner. You know the heart of a sojourner, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt." Exodus 23:9

"There shall be one law for the native and for the stranger who sojourns among you." Exodus 12:49

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me." Matthew 25:35

"You shall allot it as an inheritance for yourselves and for the sojourners who reside among you and have had children among you. They shall be to you as native-born children of Israel. With you they shall be allotted an inheritance among the tribes of Israel." Ezekiel 47:22

"Thus says the Lord: Do justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor him who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place." Jeremiah 22:3

I, like most citizens, are sick and tired of politicians not solving problems, and sitting on their hands, and sticking their heads in the sand for fear of losing their office. It is time to be pro-active. States like Arizona, Alabama, and Georgia are experiencing the harsh financial reality of crop-rotting, PR nightmare, anti-immigration law writing, while states like Utah, are flourished under Jon Huntsmans Pro-SANE Comprehensive Immigration Reform platform. I challenge everyone of you to today, to take off your party hats, and put on your cowboy hats and do what is best for Kansas. Match the employer with a vital workforce and you create a strong financial climate for our State and a better tomorrow. Create Ad Astra.

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