

**GOVERNMENTAL ETHICS COMMISSION**www.kansas.gov/ethics**Testimony before House Election Committee
on House Bill 2314****by Carol Williams, Executive Director**

The Governmental Ethics Commission does not have a position on Sections 1 and 2 in HB 2314. My testimony today is to address the amendment being made to K.S.A. 46-269 found on page 5 on line 9 which raises from \$2 to \$15 the threshold for reporting lobbying expenditures.

For the past 39 years, all gifts, all recreation, all entertainment, and food and beverage over \$2 has been reported in some fashion as either itemized or unitemized by lobbyists on their Lobbyist Employment and Expenditures Reports. HB 2314 will eliminate the requirement for any lobbyist to report in any manner any expenditure \$15 or less for the categories of food and beverage, recreation, gifts, or entertainment. In 2012, 26% of the itemized expenditures made by lobbyists on behalf of House of Representative officeholders and candidates and 21% of expenditures made on behalf of Senate officeholders and candidates would never have been disclosed if the \$15 threshold had been the law in 2012. The Commission does not calculate or post on its website any gift \$10 or under, therefore, only gifts over \$10 were factored into the percentage of expenditures noted above.

In 2000, the Kansas Legislature amended the lobbying laws to provide more transparency concerning the expenditures made by lobbyists on behalf of legislators. Food and beverage, with some exceptions is now itemized, gifts and entertainment are now itemized, and recreation with some exceptions is itemized. Section 3 of HB 2314 reverses this transparency by permitting any expenditure, in any category, \$15 and under to go unreported.

The Commission will not meet until Wednesday of this week, so I do not have their position on this section of the bill. I personally do not believe the Commission would be in support of raising the dollar threshold to \$15 for all categories of reportable lobbying expenditures since it would provide less transparency concerning the lobbying activities in the State of Kansas.