



Testimony on HB 2201 by Ed C. Rolfs

Chairman, President and CEO

Central National Bank

February 6, 2013

Mr. Chairman, members of the committee, I am Ed Rolfs, President and CEO of Central National Bank. I represented Junction City in the Kansas House of Representatives from 1978 until 1986 and chaired the Tax Committee during my tenure. I also served Kansas from 1986 to 1991 as the Secretary of Revenue. My family owned bank has been in business for over 125 years, and I am the third generation of our family to run the bank. Our bank serves diverse markets ranging from Lawrence, Topeka, and Wichita to Halstead, White City and Mankato. Much of our business is conducted in and for rural Kansas. Central has fifteen locations in rural areas across Kansas.

While I make a living as a banker, my real passion is spending time on our family farms in Clay and Cloud counties. My grandfather, Senator Frank Carlson, instilled a love of rural Kansas in all of his grandchildren and taught us a sense of community service. Granddad shares a distinction with our current Governor Brownback: they are the only Kansans to have served as U.S. Congressman, U.S. Senator and Governor of the state. With that background and strong Kansas ethic in mind, I'm here to support HB 2201.

I am continually asked 'how can one not only survive, but prosper in the rural areas of our state?' My answer is always the same—make sure you have broadband Internet access and be creative in your thinking. In my view, this is the great equalizer for many Kansans. I am continually amazed at the entrepreneurial developments that occur when everyone has equal access and is on a level playing field.

For as long as I can remember, it has been the public policy of our state to provide universal service at an affordable rate to our citizens. This bill reinforces and buttresses that important policy position.

Kansas has enjoyed several economic engines that have served us well for many years. Johnson County has provided the state great economic resources primarily driven by a large population center coupled with exceptional performance in the services sector of our economy; Sedgwick has provided state a vast array of resources flowing out of the aircraft industries; and

rural Kansas has provided a stable source of resources primarily flowing out of Agriculture and Oil and Gas and their related industries. I compare this to a 3 legged stool; take one leg away and you really don't have anything. I believe maintaining affordable telecommunications services is essential to keeping the balance in place that has allowed our state to prosper.

Banks are under regulatory assault from a plethora of new regulations flowing out of Washington, so I understand and support the desire for regulatory stability. HB 2201 is consistent with that need. Our business could not survive without high quality, reliable telecommunications services. Since we are in so many markets, we deal with most of the telecommunications providers. I've known a number of owners of Independent Companies over the years and it is no surprise to me that the quality of service we receive in our rural communities is not outdone by anyone.

Coming from an industry where we seem in a constant state of controversy with big banks fighting with smaller banks and so forth, I find it remarkable that such a significant portion of the industry has found common ground in this bill. Too many times, the legislature is asked to referee squabbles within an industry instead of focusing on the larger questions surrounding public policy.

Rural Kansas economies face uncertain times. New utility expenses that would hit every business and every resident could tip the balance for the worse. I urge you to support HB 2201 because it is good for Kansas and it's good for your constituents.

Thank you, I'll be happy to stand for questions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ed C. Brown". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.