



Testimony before the  
**Senate Commerce Committee**  
On  
**HB 2023**  
By  
**Mike Marvin, Executive Director**  
Kansas Organization of State Employees

Madam Chair and Members of the Committee:

My name is Mike Marvin, and I am the Executive Director of the Kansas Organization of State Employees (KOSE), which represents the working men and women who are executive branch employees and on whose behalf I am privileged to appear today. I thank you for the opportunity to speak with you about HB 2023.

KOSE opposes HB 2023 because it is an unnecessary, unfair and unconstitutional scheme to undermine union democracy and the institutional integrity of unions themselves, and to silence working families and the unions who stand up for them in political and legislative affairs. Unions and union monies are one of the most democratic forms that exist in this country today. We elect our leaders, we voluntarily give our dues monies, we voluntarily give our political monies; this bill is an attempt to silence that democracy. Under current Kansas law, employees who object to a union's political activities can refrain from paying dues to the union, while continuing to enjoy the benefits derived from the union's performance of its duties as the exclusive bargaining representative for labor-management issues. It is unfair and unconstitutional to single out unions for spending their funds on constitutionally protected speech

Supporters of this bill contend that this gives employees more control over their paychecks, this is not true. All monies collected for political purposes are separate from dues money and employees sign a separate deductions authorization that clearly explains that their donation is voluntary and not required as a condition of membership. It also clearly explains how the money may be used. All monies collected are deposited in a separate segregated fund.

We believe that this legislation unconstitutionally targets employees who donate to our political fund. We believe that it violates equal protection under the constitution. Right now employees are given many other options to have monies deducted from their paychecks. Monies such as United Way, AFLAC, and other options. One member even has money deducted from her

paycheck and deposited to her brother's account to repay a loan he made to her. Dues monies are not used for political purposes.

Again, the motivation behind HB 2023 is to remove from public policy debates the view of working families – as expressed through their unions – and leave the playing field to be dominated almost exclusively by corporations and other business interests. But the democratic principles on which our legislative and political processes are based support free access by all to the public debate, and government decision-making that accommodates competing interests. Kansas – and our nation – needs a more level playing field for working people and their unions in politics, not one that is more skewed in favor of corporations and other influential organizations lacking democratic accountability. KOSE opposes HB 2023 as an unconstitutional attempt to punish unions for having the temerity to stand up for the working families we are privileged to represent. We respectfully request that you will protect the rights of our members to participate on a full and equal basis in public decisions by opposing this bill.