

STATE OF KANSAS

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TOPEKA

HOUSE OF  
REPRESENTATIVES

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

CHAIR: APPROPRIATIONS

February 6, 2016

Kansas House Commerce & Economic Development Committee  
300 SW Jackson St.  
Topeka, Kansas 66612

Dear Chairman Mason and members of the committee:

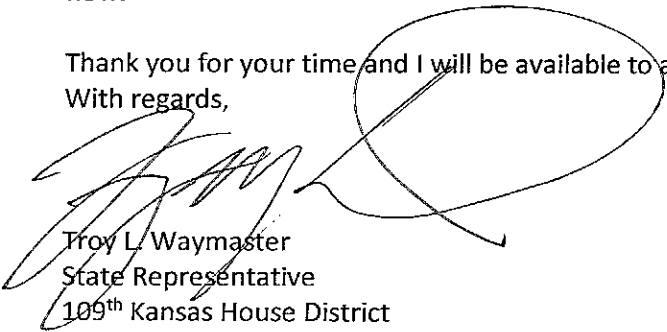
At the beginning of the 2012 calendar year, the state of Kansas implemented the Rural Opportunity Zone throughout the rural areas of the state. This program was initially designed to incentivize individuals, who met certain criteria, in moving to rural areas of Kansas. Although this plan had good intentions, I have always contended that there was a piece of the equation that was missing. Sure, you could incentivize one to move back to the rural areas of the state, however, if there were no jobs in those areas, what career might one expect?

That is where the Ad Astra Rural Jobs Act comes into effect. The Ad Astra Rural Jobs Act is, in my opinion, the other part of the equation to alleviate the rural flight that many parts of this state have been experiencing. It places within the Kansas Department of Commerce tools that can be utilized for businesses that desire to relocate, build, and/or expand in areas of the state that are defined as "rural."

In many rural communities across the great state of Kansas, the driver in their respective economies is focused on one business or industry type, namely agriculture. Presently, the agricultural community is struggling economically due to the current low commodity prices. For example, I represent seven counties in central and north central Kansas. The primary industries in those counties are economically tied to the markets of agriculture and oil production; two industries that are currently experiencing an economic downturn. Although the Ad Astra Rural Jobs Act may not overcome the main economic driver in these communities, with the incentives that could be offered through the act, perhaps during times of economic distress, these areas of the state may not experience the rural flight that is being witnessed now.

Thank you for your time and I will be available to answer any questions.

With regards,



Troy L. Waymaster  
State Representative  
109<sup>th</sup> Kansas House District