



KICKAPOO TRIBE
in Kansas

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SENATE COMMITTEE ON FEDERAL & STATE AFFAIRS

SB 202

**An Act concerning tribal-state compacts; approving a compact between the
Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas and the State of Kansas;
Relating to cigarette and tobacco sales; taxation and escrow collection**

Testimony in Support of SB 202

**On behalf of the
Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas**

Whitney Damron

Good morning Chairman LaTurner and Members of the Committee:

For the record, I am Whitney Damron appearing before you today on behalf of the Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas to express the Tribe's support for SB 202.

With me today is Tribal Chairman Lester Randall, Tribal General Counsel Amelia Holmes and other members of the Kickapoo Tribal Council. All of these individuals and the other members of the Kickapoo Tribal Council were involved with decisions made over the past 18-24 months that has led to the introduction of SB 202 that will allow the State and Kickapoo Tribe to enter into a compact relating to cigarette and tobacco taxes.

Members of the Committee who were present in 2016 will recall SB 484 introduced for the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation's tax compact and SB 485 introduced on behalf of the Iowa Nation. Both of those bills were approved by the Kansas Legislature unanimously.

During that time, the Kickapoo Tribe was also engaged in negotiations with the State of Kansas over a similar compact and although both sides were very close to agreement towards the end of the session, there simply was not time for final approval and ratification. Since that time, the Tribe and State have had an opportunity to finalize a compact agreement and are here today to support passage of SB 202 allowing this agreement to be ratified.

As with the other three Resident Tribes in Kansas, the Kickapoo Tribe is a sovereign nation with its own government. The Tribe is probably most well-known for opening the first Native American casino in our state, the Golden Eagle Casino. However, many people are not aware the Tribe also operates a school, has police and fire departments, health care facilities, agricultural interests and provides general administrative functions for tribal government. The Tribe also has a convenience store and sells cigarettes and tobacco products, which is what this compact is intended to address.

The Kickapoo Tribe has worked with the State of Kansas in the past on government-to-government initiatives, including a tribal law enforcement enactment a number of years ago and the Kickapoo Tribal Water Rights Agreement adopted last year. Legislation such as SB 202 continues that tradition and the Tribe looks forward to possible discussion and agreement on other matters of mutual interest.

On behalf of the Kickapoo Tribe, I thank you for your consideration of SB 202 and we ask for your support.

WBD

The Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas has more than 1,600 members and is governed by its Tribal Council. Tribal Council Members are: Lester Randall, Chairman; Fred Thomas, Vice Chairman; Carla Ramirez Cavin, Secretary; Russell Bradley, Treasurer; Bernadette Thomas, Christina Wahwasuck and Jason Thomas, Members.

The Tribe's reservation land is located approximately five miles west of Horton, Kansas in Brown County and encompasses an area of approximately 30 square miles (the Tribe does not own all the land located within the Federally-recognized reservation).

For more information on the Kickapoo Tribe in Kansas, please refer to the following Kickapoo Tribe websites or contact Tribal Chairman Lester Randall:

www.ktik-nsn.org

www.goldeneaglecasino.com