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Before the House Committee on Energy, Utilities and Telecommunications

January 29, 2026

Neutral Testimony on House Bill 2180

Submitted by Steve Garrett, Deputy Chief of Telecommunications
On Behalf of
The Staff of the Kansas Corporation Commission

Chair Delperdang, Vice Chair Wilborn, Ranking Minority Member Ohaebosim, and members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony today on behalf of the Staff of the Kansas Corporation Commission (Commission).

The Staff of the Commission (Staff) is neutral with respect to House Bill 2180 (HB 2180). The bill requires the State Librarian to contract with an organization to deliver on-demand information access services to persons who are blind, visually impaired, deafblind, print disabled or who have another disability. The funds for the blind information access services will come from the Kansas Universal Service Fund (KUSF). While the Commission has overall responsibility for the KUSF, the Commission is authorized pursuant to K.S.A. 66-2010 to contract with a third-party to administer the KUSF.

Staff views establishing a blind information access fund as a policy decision for the legislature. Under HB 2180 Section 2(e), the Commission's third-party administrator is authorized to ensure it has the funds to pay all amounts owed to qualifying telecommunications companies and the blind information access services. Section (2)(e) also authorizes the KUSF third-party administrator to transfer monies from the KUSF fund to the state treasurer, who will deposit the funds and credit the blind information access fund. Staff has contacted its KUSF third-party administrator regarding any administrative costs it might incur related to HB 2180, and the third-party administrator has indicated that it does not anticipate any additional costs.