



Kansas Press Association, Inc.

Dedicated to serving and advancing the interests of Kansas newspapers

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March 3, 2016

To: Rep. Ron Ryckman, chair of the House Appropriations Committee, and committee members

From: Doug Anstaett, executive director, Kansas Press Association

Re: HB 2573

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee:

I am Doug Anstaett, executive director of the Kansas Press Association. Thank you for the opportunity to discuss our newspaper association's support of House Bill 2573, which would pave the way for a more well-informed citizenry and increased governmental transparency.

The Kansas Legislature is the house of the people of the Sunflower State. Yet, often, it's as if the shades are pulled on the windows and the doors bolted shut because so few of our citizens have the time or the resources to come to Topeka to observe and participate in the legislative process.

They must rely on a shrinking Capitol press corps as well. While much of the "big news" gets covered, there are dozens of hearings each year with no one to record the activities other than the committee secretaries, and from what I've recently read, some of those committees don't even have that luxury.

Mark Twain once wrote: "Everyone talks about the weather, but no one does anything about it." The same could be said for transparency: "Everyone talks about open government, but ..." You get the point.

You have a chance with HB 2573 to do something about it.

The bill would allow for the live audio streaming of various committee meetings. It's not a complicated bill, and we don't think it's an expensive bill either. In fact, as we understand it, the technology exists following the recently completed Capitol renovation project to make this happen.

Yes, it will cost some money ... taxpayers' money. Yet it will serve the taxpayers by giving those who are interested an opportunity to listen in to proceedings, hear the proponents and opponents discuss their positions and hear legislators as they grapple with the issues.

KPA supports HB 2573 wholeheartedly and asks for your support as well. Thank you.