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HOUSE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE HEARING ON HB 2725

Written Testimony in Opposition to HB 2725 on behalf of the City of Shawnee

By Katie Killen, Assistant City Manager
March 11, 2016

Honorable Chair and members of the House Appropriations Committee:

As part of the 2016 Legislative Program, the Shawnee Governing Body adopted a KPERS statement that includes support of a system that helps attract and retain quality employees. In addition, the Shawnee Governing Body supports local control. The City believes this bill goes against both of these statements and would greatly affect the City of Shawnee due to the following stipulations contained in the bill.

1. This legislation changes the way final compensation is calculated because it does not allow all sick and vacation leave for employees hired before 1993 to count towards that final average compensation. This seems to be explained on page 3 lines 39-43 and page 4 lines 1-5.

First, this would dramatically affect key members of our staff who have worked 20+ years and planned for retirement based on benefits under the current calculation. Additionally, the City questions the legality of such a change as the legislature would be changing a vested right.

The City is becoming increasingly concerned, because of this legislation, at the number of unexpected retirements that could result and the immediate costs associated. Not only that, but these retirements seriously impact our organization, succession planning and level of service for our community.

2. The bill additionally dictates a vacation leave policy to cities participating in KPERS in setting a maximum accrual of 240 hours for KPERS employees.

The City of Shawnee looks at total compensation (salary + benefits, including leave time policies) when setting our compensation policies in trying to recruit and retain employees. This section of the bill overreaches into cities compensation practices. It should be left to individual cities to determine, through their governmental structures, how they want to handle their leave time practices.

For these reasons, the City of Shawnee is opposed to HB 2725. Thank you for your time and consideration.

