
Office of County Treasurer Joe Grisolano

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TO: Kansas House Local Government Committee

FROM: Joe Grisolano, Crawford County Treasurer

SUBJECT: HB 2235

Chairman Huebert and Committee members:

I am providing written testimony in opposition of HB 2235 as Treasurer of Crawford County. This legislation would give the Board of County Commissioners in counties with a population of 50,000 or more the authority to submit for election a question to abolish the elected office of County Treasurer and instead have the treasurer be appointed by the County Commissioners.

Historically, County Government in Kansas is managed not only by elected County Commissioners, but also by other elected and appointed department heads, including the elected Sheriff, Clerk, Treasurer, Register of Deeds, and Attorney. This allows for a separation of duties in the day to day operation of the county. Statutes were written this way to provide a system of checks and balances in the operation of county government. Each elected official works independently and many duties for each are determined by those Statutes.

K.S.A. 12-3903 already provides the opportunity for County Commissions, by resolution, to allow the electorate the right to decide whether to elect their county officials or let them be appointed by the County Commission. In November 2010, after the County Commission placed the question on the ballot, Shawnee County voters overwhelmingly chose by a margin of over 40% to keep their County Treasurer elected. It just makes sense to keep the law the way it is.

The teamwork approach, with separation of duties, works well for Counties and Kansans and has throughout our state's history. This way no individual or department has too much power or authority in the operation of a County. HB 2235 would change that entirely and give Commissioners the power to appoint and control the County Treasurer in counties with a population of more than 50,000.

I have visited with our Commissioners about this legislation and they don't believe it would be a positive change. It is our belief that Kansas voters understand and trust their elected officials and the work each of them do. Local voters also appreciate the opportunity to choose who represents them as their County Sheriff, Clerk, Register of Deeds, Attorney, and Treasurer.

In conclusion, I respectfully ask this committee to leave the decision of who serves as County Treasurer in the hands of the voters and not three or five individuals. Thank you for your consideration and for allowing me to submit this written testimony.