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Written Testimony

Date: February 7, 2015

To: Kansas House Committee on Transportation

From: Dave Johnston, President Kansas Emergency Medical Services Association (KEMSA)

Reg: HB 2157, Seat belt safety fund and increased fine for adult seat belt violations.

The Kansas Emergency Medical Services Association (KEMSA) is the professional association representing the paramedics, EMT's and ambulance service's serving the citizens of Kansas. KEMSA works on various regulatory and legislative matters as well as conferences and educational programs.

While KEMSA supports the increased education of teenagers regarding seat-belt use; many, many paramedics and EMT's assist with these efforts now and we witness the tragic impact of teenagers who fail to use seatbelts; KEMSA is concerned about the possible impact the changes in the traffic fines might have regarding some important EMS grants funded by the revenues created by those traffic fines.

Each year over \$300,000 is provided in small grants to EMS services and regional EMS groups around Kansas from the funds generated by traffic fines. These KRAF (EMS Revolving Fund) grants fund equipment and training that cannot be funded through other means. Local ambulance service budgets are challenged by decreasing federal Medicare payments, terrible state Medicaid payment rates, and pressure on local government budgets which typically subsidize emergency services.

The KRAF grants distribute funds to support small EMS operations without the administrative fees and overhead which classic grant programs must fund. The KRAF grants are very important to the EMS services in Kansas and efficiently administered in order to assure that the maximum dollars reach the point of service and are not lost in the grant administration process.

KEMSA has reviewed the fiscal note and documents provided by proponents of HB 2157 and we remain concerned about the potential loss of funds critical to EMS services throughout Kansas. As you consider HB 2157 please consider what steps might be taken to protect this important funding source.

Dave Johnston