



**Testimony in Opposition to Senate Bill 316 – Property tax lid; effective date; exemptions**

To: Honorable Chair Les Donovan  
Members of the Senate Committee on Assessment and Taxation

From: Nolan Sunderman, Assistant to the City Administrator

Date: March 1, 2016

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments in opposition to Senate Bill 316 - Property tax lid; effective date; exemptions.

The City of Prairie Village is strongly opposed to Senate Bill 316 for many reasons. Due to the lack of hearings and public input, the current statute is not feasible. The current election requirement is not possible due to the state-mandated budget approval process. The proposed legislation, Senate Bill 316, makes the current statute even more difficult to implement.

Cities must have the flexibility to react to the needs of local taxpayers and maintain essential services including public safety. Some complain of what the Federal government is mandating to the State governments, yet this legislation is a mandate to Local governments. If this is a sound idea, should Kansas citizens have the ability to vote on tax increases at the State level.

Over the last 15 years, the City of Prairie Village has increased the mill levy by less than 3.5 mills. Over those 15 years, there has been an almost 80% increase in the average sales price of a home. KPERS would like to have that return on investment. The City of Prairie Village budget is 2/3 dedicated to the Police Department, and residents have consistently voiced their dedication to providing high-quality public safety. The taxes, which the Legislature has placed an artificial cap on, are the same taxes which provide police officers, snow removal, streets, community centers, parks, 911 services, lifeguards, and code enforcement officers.

The City of Prairie Village strongly supports local control which includes maintaining control over the City's budget and financial obligations. The current property tax lid is an attack on the ability of the locally-elected officials to implement programs that have positive impacts on the community. Please do not allow the voice of a few organizations to create dreadful and lasting impacts on the State of Kansas and the citizens of Prairie Village. For these reasons, the City of Prairie Village is opposed to Senate Bill 316.