

Senate Local Government Committee

February 23, 2015

Department of Administration

Testimony in Support of SB 244

Good morning and thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of SB 244, that would make changes to the publication requirements of certain taxing subdivisions.

My name is Roger Basinger and I am a member of the Municipal Services Team in the Office of the Chief Financial Officer, which is part of the Department of Administration.

As you are aware, the Office of Repealer was established in 2011 by executive order with the purpose of identifying those laws, rules and regulations that were cumbersome, onerous or burdensome. The changes we have brought for your consideration fits that definition.

The proposed legislation is intended to reduce the publication requirements of multi-county taxing units to one newspaper within the municipality when coupled with additional publication via the official website of the home county. The legislation should ease the administrative burden and cost for the multi-county municipalities while protecting the public involvement in the budget process.

A good example of this situation is the Central Kansas Library System which is based in Barton County. The system covers 16 counties and is required to have its Notice of Budget Hearing published in each of those counties at least 10 days prior to the budget hearing. If one newspaper fails to publish the notice in a timely manner, the possibility exists that the hearing will need to be rescheduled, and publication will need to occur in all 16 newspapers again resulting in additional expense to the library system and delays to the annual budget process.

In addition, in publishing the 2015 Notice of Budget Hearing, the Central Kansas Library System incurred almost \$1,300 in publication cost for an ad valorem tax levy of \$2,030,771. As a comparison, the City of Great Bend incurred a publication cost of \$62 for an ad valorem tax levy of \$4,607,812 in its 2015 budget.

This bill would also make consistent throughout the budget law the determination of newspaper for publication and establishes the timeframe – within 30 days of budget adoption - in which the Notice of Vote needs to be published.

We believe this would improve the efficiency of the publication process for these multi-county jurisdictions while continuing to provide taxpayers with the appropriate level of notification concerning the budget process.

Thank you for this opportunity and I would be pleased to answer any questions.

