



Testimony on SB 403 – Limiting Traffic Enforcement & Fines

The City of Wichita respectfully opposes SB 403.

The bill would require the City to provide the State of Kansas with all traffic fine revenue collected in excess of 10% of total City revenues. It is doubtful this provision would ever financially impact the City of Wichita because city fine revenue is a small fraction of total revenues. However, the concept of providing fines assessed locally by municipal court judges to the State is no more appropriate than would be the concept of returning to cities a portion of court fines assessed by District Court judges and collected in District Court. In addition, to the extent that such a law reduces court costs currently recovered by municipalities, this would impact our ability to pay for the operation of our courts and diminish the court's ability to effectively adjudicate cases.

More concerning is the public safety impact of the bill. One provision in the bill would require cities to return 70% of any fine revenue collected from enforcement efforts on the national network of highways. Currently, City of Wichita police officers routinely patrol US 400, one of several federal highways in Wichita, and provide similar support on other federal highways including interstates 35, 135 and 235. The amount of fine revenue specifically collected from enforcement efforts on these highways is not currently tracked. However, the City does actively enforce traffic ordinances as part of a safety strategy to reduce accidents and fatalities, and additionally, the amounts may be material.

Any scheme requiring a diversion of fine revenue to the State would likely serve as a disincentive for local governments to patrol federal highways. The responsibility for this gap would most likely fall to the Kansas Highway Patrol. The services provided by Kansas Highway Patrol troopers are exemplary and greatly appreciated by the citizens of Wichita. However, it is doubtful that KHP resources would be sufficient to provide such additional enforcement on federal highways. Since decreased traffic enforcement would be directly correlated to increased accidents and fatalities, this would not appear to be in the public interest. The City does not support anything that would increase traffic accidents and fatalities, so safety would be our primary concern.

Additionally, the reporting requirements included in the bill would appear to cause the City to incur additional computer programming expenses. These costs are not known but would be estimated to be at least \$30,000 annually.