

Written Only Testimony Opposing HB2293

To whom it may concern,

My name is Kevin Reay. I am a Detective at the Salina Police Department. I am also one of our SWAT operators, and I am currently one of 8 drone pilots at our department. The city of Salina has benefited greatly from the use of our drones, which has included, but is not limited to the following types of events:

- Photographs of fatality crashes
- Photograph/video of an uncontrolled burn for Emergency Management
- Assisting with bridge inspections for county road and bridge
- Over watch during a suicidal threat at a bridge
- Searching for missing individuals
- Searching areas for potential homicide and suicide victims in open areas
- Searching for suspects who ran from officers in vehicles and on foot
- Providing over watch as officers made contact with a burglary/aggravated assault suspect
- Assisting the Salina Fire Department with a large commercial fire
- Assisting SWAT Team with over watch during operations.
- Assisting SWAT Team by visually clearing indoor structures with small drones prior to operators entering including locating a barricaded attempted homicide suspect who had been shooting at officers.
- Assisting Saline County Sheriff's Office by providing over watch during a search warrant

The Salina Police Department currently utilizes DJI drones. DJI is manufactured in China. Unfortunately, while I understand some of the concern regarding where DJI is manufactured, it is widely agreed upon amongst those in the local law enforcement community that DJI makes the most reliable and most affordable drones on the market at this time.

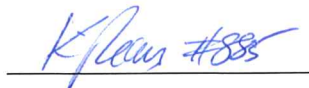
I had the opportunity to attend the Law Enforcement Drone Association conference held in Pearland, Texas earlier this month. It was interesting to hear how a majority of departments across the country continue to use DJI products due to their quality. One thing I found particularly interesting was hearing about how a large department (from a state which had a similar ban to the one that is being proposed in Kansas) is now 3D printing their replacement parts as a way to continue to use the drones that are most reliable – the drones made by DJI.

In addition, LEDA is drone agnostic and had various manufacturers at the conference. I was one of the first people to the display area in hopes of flying the Teledyne FLIR SIRAS drone. This was a drone that was touted as being designed for data security and being NDAA compliant, and I was excited after hearing the sales pitch. When I went to do a hands on test, the drone wouldn't take off, and the salesperson had no idea what was wrong. If that had been an emergency, the results of it not working could have been much more severe. The DJI Matrice 4T was at a table next to it with a different retailer, and it took off without any issue at all.

Our drone budget at the Salina Police Department is already very minimal, so procuring replacement drones and parts with the most cost effective drone manufacturer has, at times, already been a struggle for us. Restricting our department from buying DJI products will only put a further strain on the city of Salina, and will likely put us in a position where we may not be able to purchase the equipment we need in the time frame we need them, potentially leaving us to rely on antiquated technology in extremely dangerous or otherwise important circumstances.

Pushing forward a restriction such as this proposed bill will also allow the few manufacturers who make drones suitable for local police departments to continue to raise their already high prices. The strain of this bill would not only affect the city of Salina and the Salina Police Department, but it is likely to also have negative impacts on any other city (big or small) who is looking at adding drones to their existing equipment and department abilities.

Respectfully,



Detective Kevin M. Reay #885
Salina Police Department
255 N 10th St
Salina, KS 67401
(785)826-7210 ext 8576
kevin.reay@salina.org