



**TO:** Chairman Tom Kessler and the House Committee on Federal and State Affairs

**SUBJECT:** Proponent Testimony on House Bill No. 2164

**FROM:** Chief of Police Joseph P. Sullivan, Wichita Police Department

**DATE:** February 7th, 2025

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Chairman and Committee,

I am honored to submit this letter in support of House Bill No. 2164. As the leader of the largest municipal police agency in the State of Kansas, I have made recruiting and retaining qualified officers a top priority since assuming command of the Wichita Police Department.

While we have made significant progress in filling open positions, we continue working diligently to reach our authorized staffing levels. Throughout this process, we have identified several barriers that deter potential candidates from pursuing a career in law enforcement with our department. One such barrier is the current requirement that applicants be 21 years old before they can apply for Law Enforcement Certification.

House Bill No. 2164 proposes an amendment to Kansas State Statute 74-5605, allowing individuals who are 20 years old to apply for Law Enforcement Certification through the state. However, they would still be required to reach the age of 21 before being appointed as full-time or part-time law enforcement officers.

At the Wichita Police Department, we have implemented an early onboarding process to help streamline recruitment and prepare candidates for service. The proposed amendment would enable us to hire 20-year-olds into this process while they await an academy start date, provided they will turn 21 by the time they complete our six-month academy. This change would give young, qualified candidates a clearer and more efficient pathway into law enforcement, allowing them to train and integrate into the profession without unnecessary delays.

By expanding the eligibility criteria for certification, House Bill No. 2164 would strengthen recruitment efforts not only for the Wichita Police Department but for law

enforcement agencies across Kansas. Increasing the pool of potential applicants will help us fill critical vacancies and enhance public safety for all Kansans by ensuring that we have well-trained, capable officers protecting our communities.

I appreciate your consideration of this important amendment and respectfully urge your support for House Bill No. 2164. Thank you for your time and dedication to improving public safety in our state.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Joseph P. Sullivan". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Joseph P. Sullivan  
Chief of Police  
Wichita Police Department