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Date: February 12, 2025

To: Chairman Kessler and the House Committee on Federal and State Affairs

From: Chief of Police Doreen Jokerst on behalf of the City of Overland Park

Re: HB 2164 – Support (Written)

Thank you for allowing me on behalf of the City of Overland Park to submit testimony in support of HB 2164. The City supports this legislation because it will help address the pressing need to expand our pool of potential police officers and reflects the reality that responsible and capable individuals exist within the 20-year-old age group.

HB 2164 would lower the age requirement for enrollment in our law enforcement training facility from 21 to 20. This legislation addresses this gap, ensuring that we do not lose promising candidates to other fields during these formative years. This legislation expands opportunities for those who have already demonstrated their commitment to public service and who possess the potential to become exemplary law enforcement officers.

By lowering the enrollment age, the state would not be compromising the standards of our local police forces. Police officer applicants, regardless of age, undergo a rigorous and comprehensive vetting process. This includes thorough background checks and interviews, and this legislation would not take away the ability of police departments to reject any individual who does not demonstrate the necessary maturity and aptitude for law enforcement. Additionally, this would allow Kansas to be consistent with many other states that already allow entry into the police academy at the age of 20. Lastly, I can speak to this personally, as I entered the police academy at the age of 20 in the State of Colorado, and I am now serving as the Chief of Police for the Overland Park Police Department.

Thank you for allowing me to submit testimony on behalf of the City in support of HB 2164. We respectfully request that the Committee advance this legislation to the full House.