



CITY OF TOPEKA

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To: House Committee on Local Government
From: Amanda Stanley, City of Topeka
Re: SB 104 Written Only Proponent Testimony
Date: March 3, 2025

Chairman Bergquist and Members of the Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in support of the proposed amendment to KSA 19-2672. As representatives of the City of Topeka, we support this change, particularly as it pertains to Shawnee County. We believe decisions regarding the structure and governance of our local government should be made by locally elected officials and informed by our existing citizen review processes, rather than mandated by state statute.

The City of Topeka already has a well-established citizen review commission that ensures ongoing evaluation of our government's efficiency and responsiveness. This commission provides a structured mechanism for community input, allowing residents to voice concerns and recommendations about local governance. Given this, the mandatory requirement to form a 59-member citizens' committee under KSA 19-2672 is redundant and unnecessarily burdensome.

Furthermore, the fundamental intent of KSA 19-2672—to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of local government and explore consolidation—has already been addressed in Shawnee County. In 2005, a comprehensive consolidation study was conducted under KSA 12-350, leading to an in-depth analysis and recommendations on merging the City of Topeka and Shawnee County governments. The final plan was presented to voters, who ultimately rejected consolidation. This clear expression of the electorate's will confirms that another mandated committee to study the same issue is unwarranted and an inefficient use of public resources.

Amending KSA 19-2672 does not eliminate the option of forming a study committee should circumstances change in the future. Instead, it provides the flexibility for local officials and residents to determine if and when such a review is necessary. This approach ensures that decisions about governance remain in the hands of the community rather than being dictated by outdated statutory requirements.

For these reasons, the City of Topeka supports this amendment and urges the committee to approve this legislative change. Removing this mandate will allow local government to operate more efficiently while respecting the will of our citizens and the authority of local elected leaders.

Thank you for your time and consideration.