

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 8 House Committee on Transportation

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The Kansas Highway Patrol appreciates the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Senate Bill 8, and we respectfully request that the Committee consider our agency's concurrence. Senate Bill 8 would require the driver of a motor vehicle to move to a lane not adjacent to a vehicle stopped or parked on the side of the roadway displaying hazard lights, flares, traffic cones, reflective triangles, or other caution signals. If moving to a lane not adjacent is impossible or unsafe, the driver must slow down when approaching the stopped vehicle displaying caution signals. Violating the provisions of Senate Bill 8 would result in a \$75 fine.

Kansas law provides that drivers, upon approaching a stationary authorized emergency vehicle using its emergency lights, are required to move into a lane not adjacent to the stationary emergency vehicle, or if moving to a lane not adjacent is impossible or unsafe, to slow down when approaching the stationary emergency vehicle. Authorized emergency vehicles include, but are not limited to, fire, police, medical services, and tow vehicles. Other laws provide similar protections to waste collection, utility, telecommunications, construction, and highway maintenance vehicles. Senate Bill 8 would essentially mirror the requirements of drivers approaching emergency vehicles and apply them to any stopped vehicle displaying hazard lights or other caution signals.

Our troopers can attest to the danger they encounter daily when working on the side of the road. A matter of feet and sometimes even inches can be the difference between conducting a safe traffic stop and being seriously injured or killed by a passing vehicle. Therefore, we have laws to protect police, firefighters, emergency medical services, and tow truck operators. We believe such precautions should apply to other stopped motorists on our roadways.

Citizens in the circumstances described by the bill often have no choice but to stop on the shoulder of a highway after a blown tire, overheated engine, or empty fuel tank. We can all recall a time when our car left us stranded and the feeling of semi-trucks whooshing past our window, the worry for our children's safety in the back seat, and the anxiety of not knowing whether the next approaching vehicle may cross the fog line and turn a bad day into a deadly day.

This bill takes a commonsense approach to remedying an unsafe situation. Kansas would join 25 other states with similar laws, including our neighbors in Oklahoma, Iowa, and Colorado. We appreciate that the bill considers traffic, weather, and road conditions and whether these movements would be safe to perform. We also believe that making Senate Bill 8 law would strengthen our other "move over" laws as it aligns our message across the board – if you see flashing lights, move over or slow down.

In conclusion, the Kansas Highway Patrol strongly supports Senate Bill 8. We sincerely thank members of this Committee for considering our testimony and urge their support of this bill.

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