



KANSAS
ASSOCIATION OF
COUNTIES

TESTIMONY OF THE KANSAS ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES
TO THE HOUSE LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE
ON HB 2185
FEBRUARY 19, 2013

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee:

I appreciate the opportunity to support HB 2185.

HB 2185 provides a mechanism and public process for cities and counties to consider and implement an alternative organizational structure (i.e., city/county consolidation) without first seeking legislative approval. Cities and counties are currently prohibited from effecting governmental consolidation on their own without first seeking specific statutory authorization. As such, the framework of HB 2185 is positive in its direction because it gives local governments an opportunity to devise a system of local government which best meets their needs without seeking legislative approval on a case-by-case basis. This is the essence of home rule and local control which KAC has long supported.

Local units of government are pressed for money and resources in these trying economic times, and are considering creative methods to reduce costs and to expand their resources. Other cities and counties have consolidated using special legislation, such as Greeley-Tribune and Wyandotte-Kansas City. HB 2185 would allow other counties and cities to move that direction.

While we believe a *single* vote for consolidation would be more effective in promoting consolidations across the state, HB 2185—even with a dual majority—still creates a discretionary consolidation framework that we do not currently have in Kansas law.

I appreciate your support for HB 2185.

Melissa Wangemann, General Counsel