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**Testimony to the Senate Transportation Committee
In Support of SB335
March 7, 2016**

Chairman Ryckman and Committee Members,

Our associations are in full support of the proposed funding for the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center and the Kansas Highway Patrol Staffing and Training Fund as proposed in SB335 as passed by the Senate.

The Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center is a vital part of building the integrity, knowledge, and skills of Kansas law enforcement officers. Their training contribution does not stop at the recruit level of training. They are instrumental in supplying ongoing training at the Hutchinson facility, across the state at classroom events, and on-line training. The training provided assures consistency across our state in law enforcement services. The people of Kansas deserve well trained officers providing their law enforcement services.

Unfortunately, the funding mechanism for the Training Center for years has relied on docket fees. Those fees have been steadily diminishing over the past several years due to a decrease in cases. The Training Center cannot go unaffected by these reductions in funding. Either additional funding is found or the Training Center will be forced to reduce training programs for Kansas law enforcement. This would be very detrimental to our communities.

The Kansas Highway Patrol provides vital services to assist our local public safety efforts. Our rural areas are highly dependent on back up from the Highway Patrol. Our urban areas are dependent on the Highway Patrol to handle traffic related investigations and enforcement on our interstate, federal and state highways while our local forces concentrate on other law enforcement demands. Urban or rural KHP troopers and local law enforcement officers face the same criminals, the same risks, and the same challenges. We are always ready to assist each other as needed.

The Kansas law enforcement community is a network of city, county, state and other specialized agencies standing together serving the people of Kansas. We are highly dependent on the support of our state law enforcement partners. This is true in all areas of the state, including rural and urban areas.

116 municipal law enforcement agencies (45%) have 5 or fewer officers.

184 municipal law enforcement agencies (71%) have 10 or fewer officers.

18 sheriff's offices (17%) have 5 or fewer deputies.

70 sheriff's offices (67%) have 10 or fewer deputies.

Over that past several years, the ability of the Highway Patrol to provide those services our local jurisdictions depend on has substantially diminished due to reductions in staffing. Urban areas previously patrolled 24/7 are now patrolled on a part time basis. Many of the counties in the state do not have a trooper residing in the

county. Local agencies are spending more time working accidents and other traffic activities on the highways, pulling resources from other areas of local demand.

The patrol has proven itself over the years as an extremely professional law enforcement organization which we could depend on in time of great resource demands. While the Highway Patrol has maintained its professionalism, its ability to be ready to assist local law enforcement has become strained. Response times to assist local law enforcement appear to have increased. The number of on-duty officers available for such responses has decreased. And too often there simply is no trooper available when there was in the past.

The proposed funding source in this bill is passenger vehicle registration fees. This funding source makes sense due to the large amount of our work involving motor vehicles and traffic enforcement. We also solidly support the Senate floor amendment which added assurance the funds collected from these sources would remain used for their intended purposes.

It is time this essential public safety service of state government is restored. We support SB350 as a method to move down this path. We encourage you to recommend the bill favorably for passage.

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