



RILEY COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

To reduce crime and improve the quality of life for the citizens we serve

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Good afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. I'm Brad Schoen, Director of the Riley County Police Department in Manhattan, Kansas. Thank you for the opportunity to address the Committee today regarding the substitute for Senate Bill 335, a bill providing for funding of the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Center (KLETC).

The Riley County Police Department (RCPD) is an agency of 209 personnel and has served Riley County as the State's first consolidated agency since 1974. 106 of those personnel are sworn law enforcement officers, officers for whom quality training is vital. Since becoming Director of RCPD in November of 2007, RCPD has sent 63 officers to KLETC's basic course. One of the precepts of law enforcement is that we work for the public, and in the public's best interests. A concept concerning which, and with respect to substitute SB 335, leads me to the conclusion that the proposed bill is absolutely vital and good public policy to boot.

As is the case with almost all law enforcement agencies in the state, RCPD officers receive their initial training from the KLETC. That training serves to shape new officers for the remainder of their careers in law enforcement. But since its inception, KLETC's sole revenue source has been docket fees and for a number of years now, docket fee revenue has been declining. While Director Pavey of KLETC has done a commendable job dealing with a 20% decline in docket fee revenue since 2006, the rubber is about to meet the road. In the foreseeable future KLETC will need to reduce the number of officers in basic training classes, negatively affecting law enforcement agencies around the state – no one will be unaffected.

Additionally, KLETC provides ongoing specialized training for veteran officers. Most recently, KLETC worked with a prominent national expert on Fair and Impartial Policing (FIP) to kick start the conversation in Kansas with regard to policing without bias. I think we can all agree that given current national concerns regarding policing, no one wants to see an incident of that nature in Kansas. And while there are no guarantees in life or in policing, KLETC has provided the leadership to put the State of Kansas ahead of the curve when it comes to these national concerns by spearheading the introduction of FIP to all sworn law enforcement officers in the state. Initiative of this sort will not be possible without providing the requisite funding.

Substitute SB 335 will also serve to diversify KLETC's funding stream. As mentioned previously, that funding stream is currently limited solely to docket fees. Substitute SB 335 would add a modest two dollar increase to passenger car registrations and would generate approximately 3.18 million dollars annually in funding. Registration fees on trucks, motorcycles, trailers, etc. would not be affected.

All of which takes me back to where we started – substitute SB 335. The provision of law enforcement services is, in the best of times, a venture fraught with difficulty. Having been in law enforcement in Kansas for 34 years, I don't believe I can describe today's environment as the best of times. But I can say that one bright spot is the KLETC. Please support the KLETC by supporting this bill. It is in the best interests of law enforcement and the communities we serve, its impact on the public is minimal, and absent an increase in funding KLETC will be forced to cut training vital to law enforcement in today's environment.

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