

The Anderson County
Review
SINCE 1865

March 16, 2015

To: Rep. Mark Hutton, chairman

House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development

Re: Opposition to HB 2237

Members of the subcommittee,

In an era when Kansas and American voters say openness and governmental transparency are paramount, HB 2237 would keep more Kansans in the dark by allowing important public notices not to be published in newspapers and instead hidden away on government websites.

- 1) Kansans in both state and local government continue to recognize the priority value of newspapers to get the word out – please see the recent photo of Governor Brownback with a group of my local FFAers sent to me by his office last summer. Whether Pages in Representative or Senate offices, classified ads looking for workers or the publication of the county budget, it's understood that if you want information broadly and publicly disseminated – you put it in the paper.
- 2) HB 2237 would allow local governments to police their own public notice responsibilities. Website data can be tampered with, hacked or clandestinely changed in seconds. Not so with hard-copy, distributed newspapers, whose original content is confirmed by thousands of witnesses upon publication.
- 3) Public notices are a bargain and their costs reflect a microscopic portion of local government budgets. The City of Garnett, for example, spent \$2,344 on public notices in 2014 out of a budget of over \$11.2 million – or .0002092 percent. That's 2 ten-thousandths percent. How much cost will be incurred for staff, software, equipment, web hosting, security measures, etc., if local governments become self-publishers?

HB 2237 tries to fix something that ain't broke, and the highest cost will be public trust.

Sincerely,

Dane Hicks, Publisher
The Anderson County Review