



THE TIMES-SENTINEL Haysville Sun-Times
Conway Springs Star & Argonia Argosy
WestSide Story East Wichita News

March 16, 2015

House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development
Re: HB 2237

Dear Committee members,

I have visited personally with a number of legislators on the importance of public notice publication in official newspapers, and want to take this opportunity to reiterate the need to halt any further action on HB 2237. This proposed legislation, while intended to save some expenses for local units of government, would not accomplish that at all. And, it simultaneously would damage the standard of governmental transparency that most of us Kansans believe in – and rely upon.

Our newspaper group provides legal publication services for eight small cities around Wichita, seven school districts, and numerous townships. These local units of government trust us with those services, know we will accomplish those services to the letter of the law, and can count on us to provide those services at the most reasonable rates possible.

Would these same governmental units save money publishing their legal notices on a website they maintain? That's doubtful. At best, it might be a wash.

Then, we the public, must trust that somehow these legal notes are going to be posted properly and that we are going to find them in time to read them and react as needed. With the local newspaper, there are checks and balances to ensure timely publication, easy public access, and documentation of the entire process. Countless times we've seen citizens respond to legal notices they've read in our newspapers.

That, alone, is argument enough to shelve this proposed legislation once and for all. If you need more reason, please give some nod of acknowledgement that the state of Kansas should leave in place a system that works and supports local, vital businesses all across the state of Kansas. While the publication of legal notices constitutes less than 5 percent of the gross revenues generated annually by my newspaper group, there are many small, critical community newspapers in this state that might suffer dramatically with the loss of this revenue.

At a time when Kansas needs to be focused on supporting the local businesses that help make this state strong, HB 2237 is a bad proposal. Please put it to rest now.

Paul Rhodes
Owner and Publisher