



RILEY COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

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

Director Bradley J. Schoen
1001 South Seth Child Road
Manhattan, Kansas 66502 3115

(785) 537-2112
www.RileyCountyPolice.org

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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 appear before you today regarding House Bill 2553, a bill to provide funding for the Kansas Commission on Peace Officers' Standards and Training (KSCPOST) by increasing municipal docket fees by two dollars and fifty cents.

The Riley County Police Department (RCPD) is an agency of 206 personnel and has served Riley County as the State's first consolidated agency since 1974. The Department is also nationally accredited by the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). As was the case with consolidation, RCPD was the first accredited agency in the state. As an organization we take no small amount of pride in both those achievements. But back to HB 2553 whose impact on our ability to recruit quality officers depends in part on KSCPOST.

I was appointed to the KSCPOST commission by Governor Brownback in 2012, and shortly after taking office I inquired about the Central Registry as Commission meetings at that time indicated it was becoming increasingly dated, and as a result problematic. The condition of the Central Registry has not improved during my tenure on the Commission as there has been no funding for maintenance or improvement. From my perspective, the potential for this antiquated system to crash resulting in the loss of 28,000 agency and law enforcement officer records are disturbing possibilities. Frankly, it is now time to replace the Central Registry.

The Central Registry maintained by KSCPOST serves as a clearing house for law enforcement agencies around the state. During the hiring process law enforcement agencies contact KSCPOST and use the Central Registry to determine whether specific officers have a history of behavior which might make them unsuitable for employment. Who among us hasn't heard horror stories concerning officers who move from agency to agency leaving in their wake a series of complaints or, equally as bad, litigation. By taking actions impacting the certification of problem officers and making that information available to local agencies via the Central Registry, KSCPOST provides an invaluable service.

In calendar years 2014 and 2015 alone, KSCPOST has taken a total of 81 certification actions. KSCPOST also maintains the hiring and training records of 7,500 Kansas law enforcement officers in the Central Registry. I might add that the tracking of certification actions is picking up steam nationally with talk at the national level turning to coordinating the tracking of certification actions nationally. This would clearly require state level coordination – which will be impossible here in Kansas with an antiquated system.

The docket fee increase proposed in HB 2553 is an appropriate revenue stream given that it is only paid by individuals convicted in municipal courts and that 60% of Kansas law enforcement agencies are municipal agencies who employ 60% of all law enforcement officers in the state. Its impact on Kansas taxpayers is minimal.

KSCPOST's commitment to providing the citizens of Kansas with qualified, trained, ethical, competent and professional peace officers is worthy of your support, and HB 2553 is the mechanism thru which you can evidence that same commitment to the citizens of Kansas.

Brad Schoen
Director
Riley County Police Department
Manhattan, KS