

Coffey County Commissioners



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Board of Commissioners

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TESTIMONY

BOARD OF COFFEY COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

HB 2609

**An Act concerning property taxation; relating to taxing subdivisions,
approval of budgets, resolution and election requirements.**

House Taxation Committee

March 9, 2016

PROPONENT

Chairman Kleeb and Members of the House Taxation Committee:

The Board of Commissioners of Coffey County would like to respectfully ask for your support of HB 2609, which makes appropriate amendments to the tax lid imposed on cities and counties in the 2015 comprehensive tax legislation, which is scheduled to become effective on January 1, 2018.

Much has been written about the process, or lack thereof that led to the scheduled imposition of a tax lid on cities and counties in 2018. Suffice to say, that legislation was adopted without any consideration in the legislative committee process. We are appreciative of this committee agreeing to hold hearings on the tax lid issue and consider our recommendations for changes which will address some of the concerns the Commission has with this matter.

First and foremost, as county commissioners, we are elected just like you. We stand for election every four years, our meetings are open to the public and local press is almost always in attendance. We hear firsthand from the citizens of Coffey County when we prepare a budget, spend the taxpayer's money and address the affairs of the county during our weekly meetings. Accordingly, we do have objections with the imposition of a tax lid on our local authority from a higher governmental body, just as the Kansas Legislature would rebel against the imposition of a tax or spending lid by the Federal government.

That said we are willing to work with the existing tax lid scheduled to go into effect in a little less than two years and are lending our support to HB 2609.

The most significant piece of HB 2609 is to give the voters of our county a say in whether a tax lid makes sense for Coffey County. Under this bill, a city or county could opt out of the tax lid through home rule authority and make our budget subject to a 10 percent protest petition.

The bill also clarifies what expenditures at the county level can be exempted out from under the tax lid. By and large, these are items the county has no control over: Interest payments, State and Federal mandates, social security and retirement benefits, health care costs, corrections, certain economic development programs, costs associated with natural disasters, mandated tax levies and similar expenditures.

The Board of Commissioners of Coffey County reiterates their opposition to a state-mandated tax lid. However, with the adoption of HB 2609, we believe this legislation is workable and will accomplish the intent of those wanting limit on local property taxes, yet at the same time allow elected officials to do the job they were elected to do.

Thank you.