



March 14, 2016

Testimony in Support of HB 2719

Chairman Kleeb and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of Americans for Prosperity activists across Kansas, thank you for this opportunity to submit written testimony in support of HB 2719.

This bill would improve accountability for many local government property tax and bond issues by ensuring elected officials are part of the decision making process. It also changes tax levies by various boards and authorities from directive (“shall levy”) to permissive (“may levy”).

HB2719 changes the approval process for property taxes imposed by Kansas Water and Fire districts, so that such taxes require the approval of Counties. Similar approval is required for issuance of bonds. Taxes imposed by municipal universities must be approved by the governing body of the city, or city and county governing bodies, as determined by the selection process for the board. Municipal airports managed by Parks Commissions and Airport Authorities will be required to seek city approval of tax levies.

These changes will relieve local boards and authorities from the requirement to impose property taxes at a statutorily imposed rate and allow a lower rate. More importantly, this bill will require approval of city or county officials before property taxes are imposed or bonds are issued. While still retaining local control, the direct oversight by city and county elected officials will increase accountability to voters and taxpayers.

The reforms set forth in HB 2719 will move Kansas down the path of fiscal accountability at the local level.

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