

CITY OF EDWARDSVILLE



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March 4, 2016

Dear Chairman Donovan and members of the Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee:

Thank you for considering our testimony in opposition of SB 316 regarding amendments to K.S.A. 2015 Supp. 79-1801 and 79-2925(b). While we share the Committee's concern about unreasonable tax increases, we do not believe this is a serious issue in cities across Kansas. Further, we believe local taxation is a local issue where local communities should have the necessary flexibility to prepare and adopt budgets supporting the values and visions of the community.

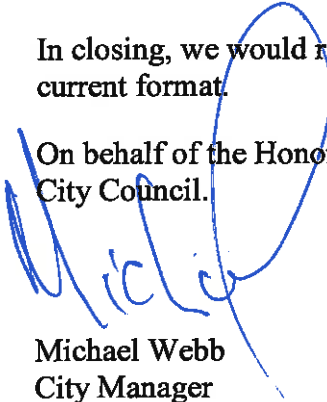
We understand it is unlikely that the amendments made during 2015 legislative session will be repealed, but further amendments such as moving up the effective date and eliminating additional exceptions to the required election will simply make unworkable regulations even more unworkable.

We do believe the amendments proposed in HB 2609 are more reasonable and workable for local communities. For example, the Municipal Cost Index, which has been published by American City and County since 1978, more accurately depicts the purchasing habits of local governments than the Consumer Price Index. Further, the use of a petition process for the election versus a required election addresses the protection against unreasonable tax increases while giving local communities a system that can be effectively implemented. This is a comparable process used in other states such as Texas.

Finally, we support exceptions to the election process for those items generally beyond the control of local elected and appointed officials. SB 316 is eroding those exemptions which are beyond our control such as State & Federal mandates and legal judgements. Also, we believe that increases in governmentally regulated benefits such as unemployment, retirement, social security and Medicaid should be exempt.

In closing, we would request the Committee oppose any recommendations to adopt SB 316 in its current format.

On behalf of the Honorable John McTaggart, Mayor, and members of the Edwardsville, Kansas City Council.


Michael Webb
City Manager

xc: Edwardsville Governing Body