Kansas County Treasurers Association
Linda D. Coon, Wabaunsee County, President

March 9, 2016

RE: SB 316

Honorable Chairman Donovan and Members of the Committee:

I thank you for allowing me to submit testimony outlining our reasons for not supporting SB 316. I represent the Kansas County Treasurers Association, as President, and am the Wabaunsee County Treasurer.

As you know, operating funds in Kansas counties originate from 2 main sources of income. These are sales tax and property taxes, with property taxes being the largest source. Most county officials reside in the counties they are elected to serve and are paying taxes there. I am sure that most county officials already strive to keep their keep budgets as low as possible to effectively operate and provide the necessary services to constituents. These constituents are our friends, relatives and neighbors. Why would we not treat them fairly when we reside and work alongside them in our communities?

County officials are elected by the same constituents who would be voting on proposed county property tax increases. Electing county officials already gives those constituents control of their local governments. Those voters prove their trust in whom they have elected, to control budgets and perform up to high standards. If the standards are not met they can, then, vote them out of office. Is that not why we hold elections for public offices?

Kansas counties are stakeholders and partners with the State of Kansas in providing many services to the residents of Kansas. County Treasurers collect real estate and personal property taxes, process titles and registrations for vehicles, process commercial vehicle registrations, provide drivers' license services, sell state park passes, etc. for the State of Kansas. Other county offices provide court services, provide and assist state agencies with law enforcement, value properties, hold elections, sell hunting and fishing licenses, provide passports, provide health services, etc. In recent years the State of Kansas has shifted much responsibility and most of the financial burden to counties. How can counties continue to absorb responsibility and costs but not be allowed to increase our budgets?

Counties anticipate much expense as a result of the tax lid. Our budgeting process begins in June and, budgets are certified by August 25. Elections are held in August and November. This would mean we would be holding special elections for tax increases, if necessary. Is that not counter- productive that we increase our expenses to allow for voting on a tax increase?

We ask that you repeal the 2015 legislation establishing the property tax lid and allow local governments to perform the functions they were created for.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda D. Coon
Kansas County Treasurer's Association President
Wabaunsee County Treasurer