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To: Chairman Ostmeyer and the members of the Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee

Libraries have always been a Kansas priority. From the federal act of 1854, which included provisions for the establishment of a Territorial library, to the development of towns where libraries came into existence as quickly as schools.

The first public library legislation was passed in 1872. Today, public libraries in cities of the first, second and third class and county and township libraries are established under K.S.A. 12- 1220.

What do people want from their libraries? The Pew Research center asked the question through a survey in 2013.

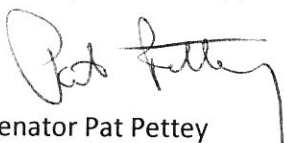
- Libraries provide help to people
- Free access to computers/ internet
- Quiet study spaces
- Research resources
- Programs/ classes for kids
- Jobs/ career resources
- Free events/ activities

These items all had a ranking of 80% or above in importance of services to women, blacks and Hispanics. Most of these items are closely tied to education for young people and are an extension of school. Information from the Kansas state library showed that 14,146,509 people visited Kansas libraries in the last 12 months. Carol Levers, director of the Kansas City, Kansas libraries shared that over 765,000 people were served in-house at the 5 library locations in Kansas City last year. Senate bill 153 removes any state or municipal building operated as a public library from the requirement of providing adequate security measures at the public access entrances.

These buildings are an extension of educational institutions and should be treated as such. Their diminishing fund sources make it particularly hard to address the need for services and pull funds to meet the demands of the personal and family protection act. Our smaller libraries find it hard to have the space for a metal detector.

I would ask the Senate Federal & State Affairs Committee to support granting public libraries a permanent exemption from existing state law and pass out SB153 favorably.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and I am happy to stand for questions.


Senator Pat Pettey