



## KANSAS STATE TROOPERS ASSOCIATION

To: Senate Transportation Committee

From: Kansas State Troopers Association

Date: February 11, 2016

Re: SB 350 — Creating the Kansas highway patrol staffing and training fund

Chairman Petersen and members of the committee, my name is Mitch Mellick and I serve as the President for the Kansas State Troopers Association. The KSTA represents over 370 members of the Kansas Highway Patrol and I am appearing here today to offer our support for the favorable passage of Senate Bill 350 which establishes the Kansas Highway Patrol staffing and training fund.

The need for a stable and consistent fund to aid the Kansas Highway Patrol in funding its pay progression plan is absolutely essential given the many recruitment challenges already existing. With staffing levels at all-time lows, the Kansas Highway Patrol's recruitment efforts have in part been hampered in part by its inability to offer interested candidates a competitive salary with other similarly situated law enforcement agencies.

You will recall as the 2015 legislative session began we found ourselves collectively facing a nearly perfect storm of challenges in recruitment and retention for the Kansas Highway Patrol including the following:

1. Impending attrition through retirements.
2. A shrinking pool of qualified applicants.
3. Increasingly complex duties and requisite skill sets.
4. Willingness and aspiration to serve as a law enforcement officer.

During the 2015 legislative session you worked aggressively as policymakers to aid and assist the Kansas Highway Patrol in meeting these challenges. Those actions included the endorsement of a pay progression plan for the Kansas Highway Patrol that Gov. Brownback Signed into effect with an Executive Order January 3 of this year. Senate Bill 350 is a critical component in the success and continuation of that plan. On behalf of the Kansas State Troopers Association I encourage your favorable consideration and passage of this measure.