

Date: February 7, 2017

To: House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development

From: Larry R. Baer
General Counsel

Re: House Bill 2185
Testimony in Support

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to present testimony in support of HB 2185 on behalf of the League of Kansas Municipalities and our member cities.

HB 2185, as written, would restore local government's ability to require the payment of prevailing wages on public projects. This would reverse action taken in 2013 that prohibited prevailing wage agreements on public projects.

The League opposes state and federal mandates requiring or prohibiting the payment of prevailing wage. Thus provisions, like the one that HB 2185 seeks to reverse, are viewed as an intrusion upon local control. For more than 50 years the League has supported the Constitutional home rule authority of Kansas cities, which provides, in part, "...cities are hereby empowered to determine their own local affairs and government ... cities shall exercise such determination by ordinance... ." ¹ Thus, self-governance, i.e. local control, is the rule.

Locally elected officials are authorized to handle local issues and problems. They are the government closest to the citizens that they represent and are best prepared to assess, evaluate, regulate and set public policy as they believe is in the best interest of their citizens and city. HB 2185 would return the discretion of requiring prevailing wage on public projects to locally elected officials.

For these reasons the League supports HB 2185 and ask that you pass it out favorably.

¹ Kansas Constitution, Article 12, §5