



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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January 31, 2017

The Honorable John Barker, Chairman
House Federal & State Affairs Committee
Capitol Building, Room 346-S
Topeka, KS 66612

Re: HCR 5004 - Testimony in Support

Dear Chairman Barker and Members of the Committee:

The Board of Riley County Commissioners unanimously supports HCR 5004.

The purpose of HCR 5004 is to extend to counties statewide the same constitutional protection of their home rule authority that cities statewide have had since 1961. Article 12, Sect. 5 of the Kansas Constitution grants home rule authority to all Kansas cities.

Because cities have constitutional home rule, they have authority to enact local legislation for subjects on which no state law exists. Equally important, the legislature cannot pass a law affecting cities unless that law applies to all cities and that law states it preempts any city legislation on the same subject. There is no logical reason to grant this constitutional protection to cities but withhold it from counties. Both cities and counties deserve equal respect from the legislature. That's because both cities and counties can best serve their constituents with the greatest amount of flexibility allowed by the state.

Members of the legislature and all this state's counties have constituents in common. You and my fellow county commissioners represent many of the same people. They depend upon local government to deliver critical services mandated the legislature.

We encourage you to respect our continuing partnership by passage of HCR 5004.

Thank you for allowing me to speak in support of HCR 5004.

Sincerely,

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF
RILEY COUNTY, KANSAS

Ronald E. Wells, Chairman

cc: Marvin Rodriguez, Vice Chair
Ben Wilson, Member