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To: Rep. John Barker, chairman of the House Committee on Federal and State Affairs, and the members of the Committee

From: Maxwell Kautsch, legal hotline attorney for the Kansas Press Association, the Kansas Association of Broadcasters, and the Kansas Sunshine Coalition for Open Government

RE: KOMA executive sessions, SB 70

Chairman Barker and members of the Committee:

I have read SB 70 and hereby respectfully offer my analysis of the bill as a proponent in the hope that it might be helpful to the committee.

The bill proposed by Senators Francisco and Baumgardner would clarify under what circumstances public bodies may recess to executive session under the Kansas Open Meetings Act (KOMA).

The amendment would expressly require that the body include a statement about the subject to be discussed in the executive session. It would also expressly require that the body's justification for the executive session must be limited to the enumerated justifications. It also streamlines the language in the law and makes it easier for the public to understand.

KOMA provides that "representative government is dependent upon an informed electorate," and that "it is declared to be the policy of this state that meetings for the conduct of governmental affairs and the transaction of governmental business be open to the public." This bill advances that policy.

I thank the Committee for this opportunity to support this bill.