



Times-Sentinel Newspapers

THE TIMES-SENTINEL Haysville Sun-Times

Conway Springs Star & Argonia Argosy

WestSide Story

East Wichita News

Feb. 14, 2017

Kristey Williams, chairman of the House Local Government Committee
RE: Opposition to HB 2247 on public notice

Dear Committee members:

I am writing to you concerning the importance of public notice publication in official newspapers, and want to reiterate the need to halt any further action on HB 2247. This proposed legislation, while intended to save some expenses for local units of government, would not accomplish that at all. And, it simultaneously would damage the standard of governmental transparency that most of us Kansans believe in – and have come to rely upon.

Our newspaper group provides legal publication services for eight small cities around Wichita, seven school districts, and numerous townships. These local units of government trust us with those services, know we will accomplish those services to the letter of the law, and can count on us to provide those services at the most reasonable rates possible.

Would these same governmental units save money publishing their legal notices on a website of their choice? That's doubtful. At best, it might be a wash.

Then, we the public, must trust that somehow these legal notices are going to be posted properly and that we are going to find them in time to read them and react as needed. With the local newspaper, there are checks and balances to ensure timely publication, easy public access, and documentation of the entire process. Countless times we've seen citizens respond to legal notices they've read in our newspapers.

If you need more reason, please give some nod of acknowledgement that the state of Kansas should leave in place a system that works and supports local, vital businesses all across the state. While the publication of legal notices constitutes less than 5 percent of the gross revenues generated annually by my newspaper group, there are many small, critical community newspapers in this state that might suffer dramatically with the loss of this revenue.

At a time when Kansas needs to be focused on supporting local businesses, HB 2247 is a bad proposal. Please put it to rest now.

Paul Rhodes
Owner and publisher, Times-Sentinel Newspapers LLC