

March 15, 2017  
Testimony in Support of SB140

## **Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee**

**Honorable Chair – Senator Caryn Tyson**  
**Vice Chair – Senator Dan Kerschen**  
**Ranking Minority – Senator Tom Holland**  
**Honorable Committee Members**

# *the active age*

## **Mission: Educate, Entertain and Empower our 55+ readers**

*The active age* is a nonprofit, award-winning monthly newspaper that is mailed free to those 55+ in Sedgwick, Harvey and Butler counties. Our 38th year of publication began Dec. 1, 2016. We print approximately 60,000 papers a month with a readership that exceeds 112,000 people.

The newspaper was created in response to the Older Americans Act of 1965 to supply information pertinent to seniors.

Our stories include senior health information, safety tips, events and activities, legislation that affects seniors, caregiver information, dealing with grief, and much more.

We also cover topics in the news. This month we ran two stories about senior opiate abuse. In February we wrote about a refugee resettlement group with a Wichita office.

Each month I also try to run at least one history story. Recent examples include memories of Pearl Harbor, bootlegging in Wichita, WW II rations books, Alf Landon's bid for president...

Our primary income is from advertising and tax-deductible donations, plus a small grant from the Central Plains Area Agency on Aging.

Three years ago, Active Aging Publishing's the executive committee took over fulltime management this non-profit 501(c)3.

The organization has struggled for the last four years: Our editor for 24 years became critically ill and contractually was eligible for 8-months full salary sick leave; an interim editor received a small salary during her absence; finally, the editor was unable to fulfill her duties and received a severance package.

The sick leave salary and severance were a financial burden to the organization.

The newspaper had a savings account, but these expenses emptied it. In May 2015 the three-person staff began questioning every expense. That brought about a number of savings.

*The active age's* largest costs -- printing and postage -- average \$20,000 a month.

Our cost-saving measures and fundraising efforts have been beneficial.

In 2016 we conducted a donation campaign asked readers to help us reach a goal of \$75,000. It was achieved. This year our goal is \$85,000.

Thanks to our cost cuts and generous readers, 2016 showed a plus in the bottom line for the first time in five years.

That said, we still are one unexpected hiccup away from ceasing publication.

A sales-tax exemption would add about \$1,000 a month to the bottom line. This will help stabilize our future so we can continue each month to mail a newspaper filled with information aimed directly to our 55+ readers interests and informational needs.

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