



Date: March 14, 2017

To: Chair Caryn Tyson and the Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee:

From: David Austin, Mayor of Bel Aire, Kansas

Re: Written Testimony in Support of SB 167

Property taxes make up forty three percent of the City of Bel Aire's total revenues. These funds are used to provide public safety, maintain public parks & recreational facilities, and to repair and improve streets. Each year, the City's budget process focuses on maintaining high service delivery levels while being as efficient as possible with tax payer money. The result has been no tax rate (mill levy) increases over the last five years and no increases are anticipated for the near future.

When new homes are constructed in Bel Aire, additional tax revenues are generated due to the assessed valuation (total value of all property within the City) increasing. This additional revenue helps the City maintain a high quality of life for residents in the form of community amenities, street improvements, and public safety coverage without raising taxes on existing home owners. Thanks to the City's growth of residential homes at about 8% per year, the assessed valuation continues to climb. This helps keep taxes low for existing citizens. However, the large increase in growth requires new infrastructure, more public improvements and public safety additions that outpace the CPI.

The demand for municipal services continues to increase as we grow in population. Having a restrictive tax lid in place greatly inhibits our ability to provide an appropriate level of service to a growing city. We urge you to leave local tax and spending decisions to local elected officials who ultimately answer to our local voters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Austin", written over a light blue horizontal line.

David Austin
Mayor City of Bel Aire, Kansas