

February 15, 2017

Chairman LaTurner and Honorable Members of the Senate Federal and State Affairs Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony in opposition to SB157 and SB158. I hope that the Federal and State Affairs Committee will take a dim view of these attempts to overreach into local jurisdictions' authority. My concerns are informed by years working with local law enforcement and government officials to build constructive working relationships with immigrants in their communities. I sincerely believe that these proposals threaten those efforts. SB157 would put KS' Highway Patrol at the disposal of federal immigration agencies, potentially diverting considerable resources from their core duties, giving the legislature only limited oversight of their operations, and, I believe, compromising Kansans' safety. I don't want to drive our highways knowing that immigrants' futures are at stake if they are stopped for a traffic infraction; that is an incredibly fraught scenario that could easily go so very badly. Law enforcement in Kansas need to stay focused on their core responsibilities. If the federal government wants more 'boots on the ground' for immigration enforcement, at minimum, they should have to supply those boots.

SB158 is an even more egregious offense to local control. Local governments across Kansas have many legitimate reasons to want to be able to reassure immigrants in their communities that they do not cooperate with Immigration and Customs Enforcement--including wanting all residents to contact police if they are the victims of crime--but sections 4A and 4F would prohibit such practices. The legislation would forbid localities from requiring warrants before placing ICE detainers; this is not only an offense to our core constitutional principles and a potentially devastating wedge between law enforcement and vulnerable communities, but it also removes local law enforcement's protection against ICE's unreasonable demands to indefinitely detain individuals, without proper cause, *at local government expense*. Local law enforcement in communities large and small can tell of holding individuals for ICE only to have immigration officials never show up to interview them. These are costs swallowed by localities that cannot afford them. If ICE has a reason to detain someone who is a threat to the U.S., they will be able to produce a warrant accordingly. Finally, SB158 would allow any individual to police their local community's actions regarding immigration enforcement and to then send complaints to the Attorney General. This invites antagonism and baseless allegations, to which the AG would then have to respond. Kansas prospers when we have commonsense policy that integrates immigrants into our communities and pursues collaborative solutions to any resulting challenges. This legislation would cut off cities' and counties' efforts to do just that.

I am sorry that I cannot be present today for the discussion about SB157 and SB158. I would certainly be happy to share my past experiences with communities around Kansas and steps localities can take to ensure that immigration continues to work for our great nation, as it has since its founding.

Sincerely,

Melinda Lewis

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Fed and State Committee

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Attachment # 39