



Senate Judiciary Committee  
(Written Only) Opposition Testimony of HB 2070  
Wednesday, March 15, 2017

Good Morning Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. I am Kent Cornish, President/Executive Director of the Kansas Association of Broadcasters, representing nearly 265 commercial and noncommercial radio and television stations across the state.

We again find ourselves appearing in opposition to a proposal making it more difficult for the media and the public to access records. In the case of HB 2070 its closing information about law enforcement officers who have been terminated or had complaints filed against them, using “personnel records” and “criminal investigations” as the exceptions to the Kansas Open Records Act.

We respect the job that CPOST is tasked with and also respect privacy of officers. But a community’s safety from rogue officers trumps some of that. Officers must have the public’s trust and thus should be subject to scrutiny. The public has a right to know about the history of those who are hired to protect and serve – particularly if there is something in their past that is questionable. We don’t need to know victim information or for that matter witnesses names. That remains private. But why the officer was terminated or the complaint filed is important to a community.

You will hear/read testimony from a television station in Wichita who has tried to inform the public about questionable officers serving in nearby communities, but finding it more difficult than in the past.

I would remind everyone that government officials are paid by the citizens and their records should be open to fullest extent possible. I would also remind the committee that the Kansas Open Records Act (45-216) states “It is declared to be the public policy of the state that public records shall be open for inspection by any person unless otherwise provided by this act, and **this act shall be liberally construed** and applied to promote such policy.”

I respectfully ask that you either amend the bill as recommended by Maxwell Kautsch or oppose this bill.

Thank you very much for your time.

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