



Written Testimony in SUPPORT of HB 2571 Senate Judiciary Committee

Good Morning Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. The Kansas Association of Broadcasters is a trade association representing nearly 260 radio and television stations in Kansas.

In 2017, there were two tragic instances where someone died as the result of law enforcement officers discharging their weapons. One in Topeka and one in Wichita. They were both recorded by body camera video and audio, and both created major concern and heightened publicity for the people in those communities. Yet how law enforcement decided to handle the recorded scenes with the public was very different. The City of Topeka waited several months to not only release parts of it to the public, but also to allow the family of the deceased to view it. Meanwhile, Wichita PD showed it to the family and public in less than 24 hours.

Body cameras should serve both citizens and law enforcement. In the wake of several high publicity shootings, it is important to remember citizens called for departments to purchase cameras and even held fundraisers to pay for them. They viewed the technology as a tool for transparency. In addition to the education and training it offers agencies, law enforcement too should see this as a way to be transparent. If law enforcement withholds video, the public is likely to interpret this as betraying a principal point of the cameras. That's a reason HB 2571 was introduced

However at the request of both House Judiciary Chairman Finch and Senate Judiciary Chairman Wilborn, the stakeholders worked together and agreed to a compromise. As written now, it would take care of the family situation described above, by requiring the release of the video within 20 days after the family requests it. We also all agreed the issues in the original bill should be sent to the Judicial Council for study this summer. A few of those issues would include the public release of video/audio, the definition of criminal investigation records, and the definition of "great bodily harm."

Thank you for your time and I look forward to your support of HB 2571.

Kent Cornish
kent@kab.net
785-235-1307