

CALVIN H. HAYDEN
SHERIFF



DOUGLAS G. BEDFORD
UNDERSHERIFF

DUTY HONOR SERVICE

588 E. SANTA FE, SUITE 2000
OLATHE, KS 66061
www.jocosherriff.org

Testimony to the Senate Judiciary in Support of HB2581

March 13, 2018

Chairman Wilborn and Committee Members,

The Johnson County Sheriff's Office supports HB2581 — Increasing the criminal penalties for the crime of giving a false alarm in certain circumstances.

“Swatting” is calling 911 and reporting a false situation to illicit an emergency response from law enforcement – usually the Special Weapons and Tactics Unit, or SWAT. One group of people that use ‘swatting’ are video gamers. Many video games are multi-player games and the competition is in real time over the Internet/gaming system with other gamers across the United States and the world. A side attraction of these games is to “dox” another gamer. Dox is the term for documented. If you get “dox’d” it means the person doxing you has found your geographical location. Swatting is one means used to prove that they have located the gamer. There are several videos of this online. Do a google search for streaming swatting or online swatting and see what comes up.

Those that commit this crime use sophisticated methods to hide their identity. The call is not usually made from a traceable number. Swatters use websites that provide false numbers, “daisy chain,” or even use apps that can be purchased or obtained online that mask phone numbers. It becomes an expensive and time-consuming investigation because digital forensic techniques are required to ascertain the criminal's identity and location. This is a highly technical field and requires specialized training.

We've all heard about these swatting incidents and the sometimes-tragic results. The Johnson County Sheriff's Office asks that you recommend HB2581 favorable for passage.

Greg Smith
Johnson County Sheriff's Office
Special Deputy for Government Affairs
Phone: 913.249.2954/Email:gregory.smith@jocogov.org