



Kansas Press Association, Inc.

Dedicated to serving and advancing the interests of Kansas newspapers

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Feb. 20, 2019

To: Rep. John Barker, chair, Rep. Francis Awerkamp, vice chair, Rep. Louis Ruiz, ranking member, and members of the House Federal and State Affairs Committee

From: Doug Anstaett, on behalf of the Kansas Press Association

Re: Testimony supporting HB 2067

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee:

I am Doug Anstaett, consultant and lobbyist for the Kansas Press Association.

I come to you today to express my association's strong support for House Bill 2067, which would require audio and video broadcasts of all legislative hearings open to the public in Kansas.

The conduct of state government is of interest to Kansans, but only a very few have the time, the energy or the wherewithal to be in Topeka every day to participate in the governmental process by attending hearings and sessions of the House and Senate.

While the working press tries to cover the legislative process, we all know there are only so many reporters to cover the numerous hearings taking place each week.

Technology has advanced and become far more affordable, providing us with the capability to have a vast number of our citizens right there in the room with legislators as they debate the business of Kansas. To not take advantage of that technology when it would serve to keep Kansans informed would be a lost opportunity to increase transparency in government.

What you do in Topeka affects all the citizens of Kansas. Any improvement that would allow more of them to witness what government does, we believe, would further enhance the democratic process in our state.

While there are still some parts of the state that lack the capability to stream such hearings because of an absence of high-speed broadband, passage of this bill would still be a giant step forward.

The Kansas Press Association and its member newspapers support HB 2067. If it would aid in its implementation, we could support a phase-in over a period of a couple of years to make this happen.

We ask the committee to support the passage of HB 2067.