



Written Only Opposition Testimony for House Bill 2219
Ed Eilert, Chairman, Johnson County Board of County Commissioners
House Committee on Judiciary
Monday, February 18, 2019

Dear Chairman Patton and Judiciary Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide written testimony on behalf of the Johnson County Board of County Commissioners regarding House Bill 2219, relating to recording of meetings. Johnson County believes this is a local control issue, which each local entity should determine.

Johnson County currently webcasts and records the Board of County Commission meetings in addition to publishing the minutes. While, this works for the county other entities may not be able to afford this option. Minutes are taken in accordance with Kansas Open Meeting Act for other boards and commissions throughout the county but they are not webcast or recorded.

In Section 1. (a) the reference to “other subordinates” is already ambiguous and by adding the requirement to video or recording creates more ambiguity of what is considered subordinates to be videoed and recorded. Johnson County has over 30 boards, commissions, authorities, councils, committees, subcommittees and other subordinate groups that currently record minutes.

Other concerns with the new language, include the cost of storing the video or audio. The space required for storing every meeting within Johnson County would be costly. The bill does not include a retention date for the videos and recordings. So how long would the county need to store them? In addition, the requirement to be accessible to the public within 24 hours after such meeting, does not state how it should be accessible. It also brings up the question, if a meeting is held on Saturday does staff work on Sunday to have it accessible to the public.

In addition to the cost of storage, the county would have to purchase equipment for multiple locations and retrofit rooms and buildings where meetings are held. There are also times when meetings are held at offsite locations. At this time the county has no cost estimate on what the fiscal impact would be. The county currently follows the Kansas Open Meetings and Kansas Open Records Acts and these additional requirements are an unnecessary expense to the tax payer.

In summary, there are significant detrimental financial, administrative, and budgeting impacts under this proposed legislation. We ask for your support to not move this legislation forward from committee. Thank you for your consideration.