



CITY OF
WICHITA

Police Department

**HEARING ON HB 2448
Committee on Judiciary
3:30 p.m. on January 22, 2020**

Chairman Patton and members of the House Judiciary Committee:

The Wichita Police Department supports the amendments to Kansas Statutes regarding flee elude and auto theft. Citizens across the state of Kansas have been victimized by individuals who steal cars and flee police in those stolen vehicles.

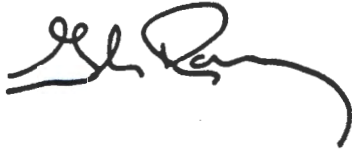
Last year, the Wichita Police Department reported 193 cases where the suspect fled from the officer. Although the department discontinues dangerous chases to protect the public, the initial moments where the fleeing suspect begins the chase is a dangerous time. The proposed amendment recognizes that fleeing from a police officer is an inherently dangerous crime that can cause serious injury or death. As we have unfortunately experienced in our community, suspects who flee in stolen vehicles are a danger to our community. We support the effort to categorize this behavior as a felony.

Auto theft has proliferated in recent years. In 2019, citizens reported 2282 vehicle thefts in the City of Wichita. The crime of auto theft is devastating for a family, especially low income families, with a single car, where the cars are often of low value and without full coverage insurance. It is the families who are impacted the most by the theft of the only vehicle in the household who will benefit from this amendment. With the huge proliferation of auto thefts in this city, the Wichita Police Department supports amending theft of all vehicles to a felony, regardless of the value of the vehicle. Declaring using a stolen car to flee police as evidence of the intent to permanently deprive is a tool that will help guide law enforcement and prosecutors on charging these crimes.

The Wichita Police Department urges the passage of this legislation to strengthen the laws against evading police and auto theft to protect the citizen of this state.

Respectfully,

Gordon Ramsay
Chief of Police

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gordon Ramsay', with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

GR:CMG