

Kansas Press Association, Inc.

Dedicated to serving and advancing the interests of Kansas newspapers

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Feb. 18, 2020

To: Rep. Fred Patton, chair, and members of the House Judiciary Committee

From: Doug Anstaett, consultant and lobbyist, Kansas Press Association

Re: Testimony in opposition to House Bill 2667

Rep. Patton and members of the Committee:

I am Doug Anstaett, consultant and lobbyist for the Kansas Press Association. I am providing written testimony today on behalf of approximately 200 daily and non-daily member newspapers across the state.

We are opposed to the passage of House Bill 2667, a bill possibly intended as a compromise to increase transparency but one that actually serves to reinforce much of what currently is being done, which is unacceptable to our association.

I'll try not to repeat testimony we submitted in support of HB 2424 except to reiterate this: the way officer-involved shootings that result in no charges are currently handled does not serve the families or the public. A person in our community is no longer with us, but the information needed for family members and the public to judge the decision of the officer and the prosecutor is so limited as to be useless. In the process, public trust can be compromised.

This bill is inadequate and even counterproductive because even though the outside agency would "produce a written, investigative report following the completion of the investigation," the district or county attorney would then produce an abbreviated summary of the report. In our view, that would serve to negate the independence of the findings.

We believe that independent investigative report should be released as is or at least in redacted form.

In addition, HB 2667 exempts officer-involved deaths resulting from automobile accidents, a subject of great interest in our communities when high-speed chases result in the death of innocent individuals.

We strongly oppose HB 2667 as a watered-down, neutered version of HB 2424. A compromise between the two bills would make more sense and better serve the interests of law enforcement, families of victims and the public.

We oppose HB 2667 as written and ask you to reject it as well.