

Kansas Peace Officers' Association



INCORPORATED

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Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee

Opposing HB2667

February 18, 2020

Chairman Patton and Committee Members,

The Kansas Peace Officers' Association respectfully opposes HB 2667.

The KPOA recognizes law enforcement officers are in place to serve the public. We also acknowledge any death, including a death during contact with a law enforcement officer, should be impartially investigated.

Some issues addressed by HB 2667 are already followed. For example, since the majority of law enforcement agencies in Kansas are smaller agencies that serve rural, rather than metropolitan areas, an outside agency routinely investigates not only deaths involving an officer, but shootings or serious injury involving an officer. The Kansas Bureau of Investigation is normally requested to conduct these investigations. And, once the KBI investigation is complete, it is forwarded to the county attorney or district attorney for review.

However, the KPOA acknowledges the Kansas County and District Attorneys' Association is opposed to the bill.

One area of note to the KPOA involves the release of the investigative report prepared by the outside agency. HB 2667 indicates no part of the investigative report shall be released until the family member of the deceased person has the opportunity to review said report. What happens with the report after this opportunity? Is the prosecutor required to release the report or is it at his or her discretion?

For the same reasons noted in written and oral testimony in opposition to HB 2424, the KPOA is opposed to releasing the complete investigative report to the public. The members of KPOA recognize the need to work together with the KCDA to ensure not only is a fair and impartial investigation conducted, but rights of law enforcement officers as well as potential witnesses are protected.

The members of the KPOA take pride in providing professional and impartial law enforcement services to the citizens and visitors of Kansas.

Thank you for your attention.

John DeFore
Vice-President