

CITY MANAGER

February 10, 2020

Rep. Kent Thompson, Chair  
Kansas House Local Government Committee

Re: Opposition to HB 2580 concerning Annexation of Territory by Cities

Dear Mr. Chair and Committee Members:

On behalf of the Mayor and City Council, thank you for this opportunity to testify on the value of our state's current annexation laws. The ability of cities in Kansas to promote and plan for orderly growth is inherent to the economic success of our cities and therefore our state.

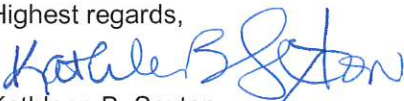
It is no secret that the vast majority of counties in Kansas are depopulating and that our state's population base is congregating in and around certain metropolitan and micropolitan areas. Economically, people need to live where they can find work. As people congregate, systems must be in place to pay for public services. Annexation is a necessary tool to ensure services are paid for by those who benefit and can be provided well into the future.

In Kansas, cities are the primary providers of public service infrastructure in urban and suburban environments. HB 2580 would disrupt the system established to ensure equity in taxation for these public services. It would create a situation where the providers of services would have no ability to collect payment for use of their streets, libraries, or other services provided to the public. You will likely agree that the one thing people dislike more than higher taxes is **unfair taxes**. The state's annexation laws are a key part of the system for ensuring equity among those who pay and those who benefit from public services.

State laws governing annexation require cities to develop a service extension plan, give notice to property owners, and hold a public hearing. These laws also provide for county commissions to ensure cities actually provide the services promised. State laws are respectful of the rights of property owners as well as the benefits that cities provide such as safe drinking water systems, sanitary sewer systems, and other infrastructure to support modern-day living for denser populations than possible in rural areas. Using the public notice and hearing process required by the current law, the Derby City Council has both **approved and rejected** proposed annexations based on issues raised by residents.

Property owners facing annexation understandably often focus on the increased taxes rather than the benefits they have received or will receive in the future from municipal services. Current annexation policy works, and Kansas should be proud of the contribution its laws make toward fair taxation and economic prosperity.

Highest regards,

  
Kathleen B. Sexton  
City Manager