

Butler County Sheriff's Office

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February 3, 2020

Senate Committee on Assessment and Taxation
Senator Caryn Tyson, Chairman

Dear Assessment and Taxation Members,

As the Butler County Sheriff, I would like to express my opposition to SB 294. I am in strong opposition to this bill as it contains serious flaws and does not include a Public Safety exemption. The current tax lid contains language exempting expenditure increases associated with public safety, which is the (a?) cornerstone of local government. SB 294 does not allow for a Public Safety exemption as SB 294 does not take into consideration population growth in our County, which requires an increase in our service.

Butler County is one of the few counties in Kansas still experiencing positive growth in both our incorporated communities and rural areas. As such, we continue to see growth both in our response to crime and call volumes in our County. Due to Butler County's population growth expenses associated with road patrol and the detention facility increase at an equivalent rate. However, SB 294 does not accommodate for growth of service without requiring the County Commission to shift expenses from other County programs. As the Butler County Sheriff, responsible for the provision of law enforcement to the rural population of Butler County, I find this lack of accommodation to be unacceptable. In order for the Butler County Sheriff's Office to effectively perform our job, we need support from other County agencies. Shifting costs to support the Sheriff's Office's operations, while cutting other agencies' budgets, will ultimately negatively affect our service to the citizens of Butler County.

I respectfully request that SB 294 be rejected, or that a public safety exemption and a provision that accounts for population and revenue growth in assessed valuation be added. As a County we cannot keep pace with the requirements for public safety without the equivalent budget necessary to support our operations. I appreciate the opportunity to submit this testimony and again request the Committee to not support SB 294.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly Herzet". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Kelly Herzet
Butler County Sheriff

CC: County Commission
William H. Johnson, Jr, Butler County Administrator
Butler County Legislative Delegation

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