



# City of Lawrence

CITY COMMISSION

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JENNIFER ANANDA, JD, MSW

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CITY MANAGER

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March 5, 2020

Senator Caryn Tyson  
Chair – Senate Assessment and Taxation  
Room 152-S, Statehouse  
Topeka, KS 66612

Re: Senate Bill 396

Dear Senator Tyson and Committee Members,

I am writing on behalf of the City of Lawrence to oppose Senate Bill 396 and urge the committee to reject this legislation. While we appreciate your service and efforts to balance critical issues, Senate Bill 396 would erode the Home Rule Authority of Kansas municipalities and significantly impact the level of services we are able to provide. The bill as drafted, would discontinue the apportionment of any countywide sales tax for general purposes to cities beginning on July 1, 2020.

In 2019, City revenues from this source are estimated to total \$11,649,614. If this transfer is eliminated, other revenue sources will have to be increased – most likely property tax increases. The property tax increase required to replace the entire \$11,649,614 would be approximately 10.67 mills.

In November 1994, Douglas County voters approved a 1.0% countywide sales tax. Per the current state statute, proceeds are apportioned among the county and each city located in the county based on the ratio of property tax revenues and the population of the City of Lawrence to the total property tax revenues and population of the County.

Eliminating this transfer would have a deleterious effect on the City of Lawrence. The adopted ballot language from 1994 noted that the proceeds from the sales tax would be used toward the Lawrence-Douglas County Health Department, the Bert Nash Mental Health Center and the Douglas County Visiting Nurses Association, reduction of ad valorem property taxes, and the development of parks and recreation facilities.

The power to adopt a budget, set local mill levies and create strong and prosperous Kansas communities must reside with locally elected representatives who are directly accountable to voters. That is the authority the people of Kansas gave to Kansas cities in 1960 by adopting the Home Rule Amendment to the Kansas Constitution. This bill undermines that authority and



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Page 2 of 2

would impact over 400 Kansas cities. Senate Bill 396 is harmful to Kansas municipalities and is not being requested by the League of Kansas Municipalities; therefore, we urge the committee to not recommend it for passage.

Again, thank you for your service and consideration of this important issue.

Sincerely,



Craig S. Owens  
City Manager

c: Mayor and City Commission