



Testimony on Senate Bill 62
Senate Committee on Transportation

Prepared by
Lieutenant Stephen E. La Row
Kansas Highway Patrol

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The Kansas Highway Patrol (KHP) appreciates the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of Senate Bill 62. This bill would exempt police vehicles engaged in certain actions from audible or visual signal requirements set forth in K.S.A. 8-1506, 8-1720, and 8-1738.

Currently, law enforcement officers throughout the state are responding to a variety of calls for service and critical incidents that require the use of lights and sirens. This traditional approach however, is not the best practice and could lead to unintended consequences when conducting traffic enforcement. If an officer conducting traffic enforcement activates their emergency equipment right away when they attempt to overtake the suspect vehicle they will alert the suspect. The suspect will have a considerable lead to initiate a pursuit and successfully flee.

Officers will typically observe a violation and then pull out into traffic and speed to overtake a vehicle. The officer will not activate their emergency equipment right away. Instead the officer must speed above the posted speed limit to catch up to the violator and begin to collect information and determine if a traffic stop is warranted. The officer will run the license plate to discover if the owner is wanted or if the vehicle is stolen. Other information such as Amber Alerts and Silver Alerts will also be available. Collecting this information prior to initiating a traffic stop with emergency equipment is critical to the safety of the officer.

Traffic enforcement is a basic law enforcement activity. Currently, Kansas statute does not give much support to its law enforcement officers when being confronted about what has been a nationwide long standing and successful practice.

Senate Bill 62 does not relieve officers from the consequences of reckless disregard for the safety of others. Instead it gives clear guidance to law enforcement on how to successfully and safely enforce traffic laws and investigate potential crimes. Senate Bill 62 gives clear direction to officers that they must come to a stop at intersections before proceeding.

In closing, the Kansas Highway Patrol fully supports SB 62 because it offers clear guidance and will help in the Kansas Highway Patrol's mission to vigorously pursue, apprehend, and prosecute those who utilize Kansas highways for criminal activity.

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