



**Testimony to the Senate Utilities Committee  
In Support of HB2084  
March 13, 2019**

Chairman Masterson and Committee Members,

The members of the Kansas Association of Chiefs of Police urge you to pass HB2084 favorably. However, we are concerned with the House floor amendment changing the rate to \$0.82 which has created unintended consequences to other provisions in the bill. Our support is based on the following needs.

**Funding to Sustain the Current System**

Our highest priority request is to assure sufficient funding to maintain current system capabilities. Information provided by the Post Audit Report and the Coordinating Council have outlined how this is not possible with current funding and demonstrates the need for additional fund resources. Without additional funding the only choices will be to roll back current systems or transfer more costs to local taxpayers. The Council has also explained local governments already shoulder a considerable portion the operating costs of Public Safety Answering Points (Dispatch Centers) across the state. Placing additional costs on counties and cities will be a tremendous financial burden, particularly for those with low populations. It should be remembered the 911 system enhancements were started with the intent for the user fees to pay the cost of enhancing and maintaining the technology systems. We believe the portion of the fee increase supporting this priority is critical to the future of NG911 in Kansas and to public safety.

**Funding for PSAPs**

The Coordinating Council has provided a summary demonstrating the minimum funding provided to the small PSAPs does not meet the basic expense of supporting the new technology. We believe the provision in HB2084 to raise the minimum funding from \$50,000 per county to \$60,000 should be a priority. According to the calculations from the Council, that increase is the minimum needed for proper support of these smaller PSAPs. We strongly urge you to include ample funding to carry out this adjustment in the minimum payment.

As the population density and call load of the PSAP service area increases, expenses to operate the PSAP also increase. The funding for those PSAPs whose funding is above the minimum and determined by the statutory formula also need additional funding and we support a portion of a fee increase to make this adjustment. The House floor amendment changing the fee to \$0.82 has not only eliminated funding for these increases, but has resulted in reduced funding from current amounts.

**Grant Fund**

When the legislature passed the 911 Act in 2011, they created a Grant Fund with the intentions of this fund doing two things: 1) provide funds for the administration of the Coordinating Council, and 2)

make grants available to PSAPs for urgent and unexpected needs. The particular need for these grants was for the smaller PSAPs with limited local funding. Since 2011, this fund became the source to pay for the state contracts and funding for grants have not been available as envisioned. We are not disagreeing with the state contracting concept as that clearly does have advantages. But we have been concerned this fund is not used for intended purposes. At our request, the Coordinating Council included in this bill the creation of the State Operations Fund which will support the administrative costs and the state technology contracts. We support this change as it creates transparency of the intended use of those funds and leaves the grant fund solely for the intended grants, but it had no funding source. We ask you to retain the House amendment creating funding for the grant fund.

### **Administrative Processes**

In late 2017, our members along with members of the Kansas Sheriffs Association became concerned about some of the administrative processes in the existing statutes and their interpretation. We began discussions with the Coordinating Council that led to a mutual agreement the Council would add to the bill providing clarity addressing our concerns. These amendments have no ramifications on the funding request. Those are included in this bill and are very important to our members.

### **Future Development**

It is our hope the legislature will see the value of their investment in this system to this point and recognize new technology will provide avenues for additional enhancements. Technology has a relatively short life cycle and replacement must be completed periodically. Future investments will be required to accomplish this.

### **Concerns with House Floor Amendment Reducing Fees**

The House floor amendment which reduced the total fee to \$0.82 has created a reduction in funding for the local PSAPs from current levels. The local PSAPs have not received any increase in funding since the new law passed in 2011. Funding needs to be restored to provide some relief from rising costs which are being borne by local tax dollars. The House amendment was made by changing the fee without adequate consideration of unintended consequences on other components of the bill. In our opinion that amendment needs to be removed from the bill.

### **Summary**

Emergency services response starts with a robust and dependable 911 system regardless of whether the source of that crisis is criminal activity, accident, fire, or medical. We should not take a step backwards in providing modern technology to enhance public safety. In the electronic world we are in today, one of the most critical components in providing this essential public safety service is the mapping and location capabilities the new technology has given us. But the enhancements go beyond that, including the connectivity of PSAPs in an effort to provide seamless access during disasters that may affect an individual or group of PSAPs.

The passage of HB2084 is important to our members. We recognize that priorities must be part of funding and policy decisions. It is our desire to continue to assist you with information you need during that process.

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