



SEDGWICK COUNTY, KANSAS

Department of Public Safety

Division of Emergency Communications

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Chairman and Committee members, thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on behalf of Sedgwick County in reference to HB 2084. Sedgwick County is in strong opposition of HB 2084, as amended by the House, with a 9-1-1 fee of \$0.82. Sedgwick County is in support of the original bill that included an increase of the 9-1-1 fee from the current rate of \$0.60 to \$1.03 per month. Sedgwick County respectfully requests that you reject the current amended bill and support HB 2084 as originally introduced.

The proposed fee of \$0.82, with the disbursement formula provided in the legislation, would prove detrimental to 9-1-1 services in Sedgwick County, a 9-1-1 system that serves a community of over 500,000 people and approximately 6 million annual visitors to the Wichita area. While the proposed fee may be viewed as an increase, the disbursement formula leaves only \$0.58, rather than the current \$0.60, being distributed to the Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP), or 9-1-1 centers. This decrease would result in more than \$100,000 being cut from the Sedgwick County 9-1-1 budget – a budget that already runs a growing deficit of over \$200,000 annually.

Reinstating HB 2084 with a 9-1-1 fee of \$1.03 provides adequate funding for 9-1-1 services at both the local level and throughout our great state. With the \$1.03 fee, the local 9-1-1 center would see a \$0.20 increase in what is received to fund 9-1-1 operations. This increase will be directly felt by citizens who call 9-1-1 in that it will help to provide for a reliable, timely response to emergency calls every day, every time.

In addition, we support the proposed disbursement formula that accompanies the \$1.03 fee. Sedgwick County, along with 75% of Kansas 9-1-1 centers, utilizes the statewide call handling solution, or the Kansas Next Generation 9-1-1 Solution. Utilization of the Kansas NG9-1-1 Solution has allowed Sedgwick County to migrate from an end-of-life 9-1-1 system, without manufacturer support in the event of a system failure, to a cost effective solution that evolves with technology to ensure that our residents can consistently reach emergency services, in whatever medium is technologically available, during their time of crisis. Within the 9-1-1 fee, the \$0.23 that is allocated to the state operations fund will guarantee that this Kansas NG9-1-1 Solution remains available to Sedgwick County, and all other counties on the system.

In considering this legislation, I ask that you pause and reflect on what 9-1-1 is. We are taught from a very young age that 9-1-1 is the number you call when something is occurring that is beyond what you are equipped to handle. We teach people to call 9-1-1 when bad things happen and we promise them that 9-1-1 is going to answer the phone every single time and they'll be able to help, no matter what. 9-1-1 is more than a number – it is a promise and a commitment to our community that help is just a quick phone call away and that you are never alone. To follow through on that commitment, 9-1-1 services must be appropriately funded.

In summary, I respectfully ask that you oppose HB 2084 as amended and support the original bill allowing for an increase to \$1.03 per month and distribution formula that will keep NG 9-1-1 viable for years to come.