



RILEY COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

To reduce crime and improve the quality of life for the citizens we serve

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March 10, 2022

The Honorable Senator Kellie Warren, Chair
Members of the Senate Committee on Judiciary
Neutral Testimony to House Concurrent Resolution 5022

Re: House Concurrent Resolution No. 5022

Dear Committee Members:

I am writing as a neutral witness to the proposed resolution and subsequent amendment efforts to the Kansas Constitution reference this matter. Although the resolution as submitted preserves the Riley County Police Department, we all know that Bills can be amended without warning and this provision could be stripped from the Bill. Therefore, I respectfully urge you to preserve the language in lines 19-21 on page 1 to ensure the Riley County Police Department can continue to effectively protect and serve the citizens of Riley County with its consolidated law enforcement agency.

Law enforcement services are expensive everywhere and excellent services can cost more, but it doesn't in Riley County because of consolidation and accreditation. The late Donn Everett is considered the founding father of the consolidated law enforcement in Riley County. He was the former Riley County Attorney, State Representative, House Majority Floor Leader and State Senator. His broad experience as a city commissioner, county attorney and legislative leader provided the unique perspective to create such a model.

Just like the founding fathers of this great nation, Mr. Everett's vision and brilliance over 45 years ago led to a radical transformation by consolidating local law enforcement that remains unconventional and incredibly brilliant today. The Riley County Police Department (RCPD) may be the only model like it in the country and I'm not sure if Mr. Everett could have accomplished this in today's political climate. Donn Everett was concerned about disparate levels of competence, training and professionalism among the sheriff's office and other two local police departments. In the 1970's, he convinced the voter's not once, but twice that there was a better way. He was right, and it was made even better in 1991 when the RCPD became the first Kansas law enforcement agency to earn international accreditation. This means that the police department is accountable for adhering to the best practices in law enforcement. Accreditation is voluntary and only 5% of all law enforcement agencies in this country have embraced this standard, there are only 11 in Kansas.

During my 37 years in law enforcement, all of which have been at the Riley County Police Department, I have developed a strong commitment and appreciation for professional



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policing that's designed to withstand political interference, fads like "defunding", unwarranted attacks based upon events elsewhere in our country, and other claims and assumptions predicated on misinformation. Predictable and stable funding, mutually respectful relationships based on trust and competence among the various entities served by the RCPD, are critically important ingredients that have led to a topnotch police department serving Riley County. The Riley County Law Enforcement Agency, aka: The Law Board, serves as a de-facto citizens' oversight group of people appointed by Manhattan and Riley County local elected officials to ensure that the aforementioned benefits to its citizens are protected. They have the responsibility of setting the budget, appointing the Director and approving policy. Some Law Board members are also the same officials elected by both jurisdictions.

When compared with other Kansas counties who have similar demographics and services provided by multiple law enforcement agencies the cost of operating the RCPD is 5-10 percent less. Based upon KBI data, Riley County enjoys the added benefit of crime rates that have remained lower than the state average every year since 2003, maybe longer. This lower cost of policing translates into millions of dollars in annual savings and doesn't even factor in the drastically lower number of RCPD police officers needed per capita which is 1.5 per 1,000 residents instead of the national average of 2.0 per 1,000. That would equate to another 40 police officers on the payroll and require a few more million dollars in annual funding. The ratio of law enforcement officers in Kansas per thousand residents is much higher than the national average.

I ask you to take me at my word that Riley County citizens are served by one of the most genius creations I have ever seen in U.S. local law enforcement. Maintaining this model is a no-brainer and will preserve the safety of Riley County citizens for many years to come.

Should you choose to advance HCR 5022, I respectfully urge you to preserve the language in lines 19-21 on page 1 to ensure the Riley County Police Department can continue to effectively protect and serve the citizens of Riley County with its consolidated law enforcement services.

Sincerely,

Kurt Moldrup
Interim Director
Riley County Police Department