

STATE OF KANSAS
SENATE CHAMBER

STATE CAPITOL, RM 125-E
300 S.W. TENTH AVENUE
TOPEKA, KANSAS 66612
(785) 296-7390
ethan.corson@senate.ks.gov



DISTRICT ADDRESS
P.O. BOX 8296
PRAIRIE VILLAGE, KANSAS 66208
(785) 414-9215
ethan@ethanforkansas.com

ETHAN CORSON
7TH DISTRICT

To: Senate Transportation Committee

From: Senator Ethan Corson

Date: February 24, 2021

RE: SB 167

Chairman Petersen, Vice Chair Claeys, Ranking Member Hawk, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 167.

I was motivated to introduce this straightforward worker safety measure after hearing from utility workers about the dangers and near-misses they face while doing their already difficult job on Kansas roadways. Indeed, we had an incident right here in Topeka where an Evergy service vehicle was rear-ended by a distracted driver.

SB 167 adds utility vehicles engaged in emergency repairs to electrical utility or natural gas equipment to the classification of emergency vehicles. This bill allows these vehicles to be classified this way without a board of county commissioner's designation.

Enacting this legislation will put Kansas in line with the 20 other states, including Missouri and Nebraska, that specifically include utility vehicles in their "Move Over" law. (Kansas law currently covers police, firefighters, paramedics, tow truck operators, and highway maintenance workers.)

As last week demonstrated, our utility workers brave the toughest conditions imaginable to keep on and restore our light and heat. Passing this legislation will provide these workers with a small measure of additional protection as they go about their already dangerous job.

That is why this common sense legislation is supported by the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, the Kansas City Board of Public Utilities (BPU), Kansas Electric Cooperatives, Inc. (KEC), Evergy, Kansas Municipal Utilities (KMU), Black Hills Energy, Kansas Gas Service, Kansas Electric Power Cooperative, Inc. (KEPCo), Sunflower Electric Power Corp., and Atmos Energy.

I respectfully ask that the Committee advance this bill to the full Senate in order to protect the safety of these vital workers.