



TESTIMONY

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House Federal and State Affairs City of Wichita Opposition to HB2578

The 2012 State Legislative Agenda of the Wichita City Council cautions the state against enacting immigration law that puts an unreasonable burden on local government.

HB2578 falls in that description as an unfunded mandate that will create far greater problems than it seeks to resolve.

The Wichita Police Department offers the following information:

Wichita Police Department has adopted a philosophy of community policing since the early 1990s. Police cannot solve crimes without community support and cooperation. A dialogue and trust between citizens and police must exist before this support and cooperation can happen. Citizens and police work together to solve crimes and issues of community decay because we have worked hard to establish this trust for the past 20 years.

Creating a state law which pits local police against thousands of citizens will destroy this cultivated relationship. Crimes will no longer be reported by many of our Hispanic population. This lack of reporting serves the criminal element quite well. A person can steal from, rob, and assault members of this population group without fear of reprisal because calls will not even be made to the police. The quality of life in the City will diminish and criminals will flourish.

Police officers who ride the street are a valuable resource to the community. Keeping them on the street, away from unnecessary "administrative work", is paramount to the safety of the City. It is why we spend millions of local dollars on in-car computers and are researching an E-citation system. Checking "legality" of citizens will cut directly into patrol time. Taking citizens to jail regarding immigration investigations will mean the officer will lose 1-2 street hours of service for every person they place into custody.

Jail space is already at a premium in our community. Municipalities are now obligated to pay jail fees for all prisoners they bring to the county jail. HB2578 will increase jail fees for all cities in Sedgwick County and will take up precious bed space in our jail without increasing public safety in the community.

Having to verify citizenship of even a small percentage of the people involved in those cases will take officers off the streets for hours at a time, hurting public safety efforts.

As our Governor reminded us during the recent League of Kansas Municipalities City Hall Day, immigration is a federal issue and needs to be solved by the federal government. The role of local police has always focused on local public safety issues and proactive relationships with members of the citizenry.

The City of Wichita concurs with our fellow municipalities that these proposals are unworkable, expensive, unfunded mandates on cities and counties.

House Fed & State Affairs

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Attachment 24



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House Federal and State Affairs

City of Wichita Opposition to HB2577 and HB2576

The 2012 State Legislative Agenda of the Wichita City Council cautions the state against enacting immigration law that puts an unreasonable burden on local government.

HBs 2577 and 2576 fall in that description as unfunded mandates that will create far greater problems than they seek to resolve.

As our Governor reminded us during the recent League of Kansas Municipalities City Hall Day, immigration is a federal issue and needs to be solved by the federal government.

These misguided proposals will cause administrative delays for the vast majority of population that are unaffected by the issue. Scarce tax dollars are already stretched by the economic downturn and the growing demand for government services. Adding the administrative burdens of HBs 2577 and 2576 will exacerbate the problem and lower the quality of life of our community.

The City of Wichita concurs with our fellow municipalities that these proposals are unworkable, expensive, unfunded mandates on cities and counties.