



Kansas State Lodge

Fraternal Order of Police

Testimony in Support of House Bill 2049
The Law Enforcement Protection Act

Presented to the House Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice
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Chairman Jennings, members of the Committee, thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 2059, the Law Enforcement Protection Act.

There were 21 ambush-style killings of Police Officers across the country in 2016. This is 21 out of 64 gunshot related deaths that year. According to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, ambush-style killings are the highest they have been in 2 decades. Let that sit for a few moments.

This means that at a minimum 21 Officers paid the ultimate price for the safety and security of others. They were murdered for nothing more than the one simple fact: They wore a badge, and swore an oath with their lives, to protect each and every one of us. We have seen in recent times, like in Florida, Texas, and many other places, photos of the brave men and women behind the badge running towards danger. Also in these photos we see countless officers using their bodies to shield civilians from harm.

While there are laws in place to punish those who commit the heinous crimes of physically attacking or killing an on-duty law enforcement officer, there are countless other Officers who are the victims of other crimes for the same reason: wearing a badge. The offenders in these

cases are charged the same, regardless of their victim. So what is in place to protect those who protect us? Nothing at this current time. I know personally of an Officer in Wichita, KS who arrested a suspect for numerous crimes. During booking, the arrestee threatened to kill the officer when he was released from jail. This isn't something that is all that uncommon and shockingly we are used to that. The arrestee then took it further, he noticed that the Officer was wearing a wedding ring. The arrestee then went on to say that he was going to look up where the officer lives and rape and kill his wife. What was the motivation behind this? It's a simple answer, because our officer wears a badge.

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“Law is the safeguard of freedom”. That is the motto of the Fraternal Order of Police. Our Republic is a society where duly elected representatives pass laws and the executive office executes them. However, laws mean nothing if they cannot be enforced. As the soldier is the guardian of our civil society from without, the law enforcement officer is the guardian from within. The law enforcement officer protects the peace, our property and more importantly, our lives. Therefore, any crime committed against a law enforcement officer is as much an attack on civil society as it is one against the person targeted.

This bill makes it clear that victimizing a person due to their status as a law enforcement officer will not be tolerated by the people of this great State.

Thank you for your time, and giving me the privilege of speaking to you today. I would stand for questions.