

**Testimony on House Bill 2376**  
**House Taxation Committee**  
**March 16, 2017**  
**Harvey County Council of Governments**  
Bernie Koch

Mr. Chairman and members of the committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill 2376 on behalf of the Harvey County Council of Governments. That organization includes Harvey County and the seven cities in the county: Newton, Hesston, Halstead, North Newton, Sedgwick, Burrton, and Walton.

The local governments of Harvey County support the flexibility to use property taxes to continue services and add new ones that local communities need and want.

To that end, we oppose the 2015 legislation that limits certain increases without an election and urge its repeal. In addition to being unworkable from a timing standpoint, the 2015 legislation limits the ability to provide the services for which local governments are responsible.

The legislation dilutes local control, creates more bureaucracy, and lacks coordination with budget timelines. It discriminates against smaller communities who lack the ability to bear the costs of elections.

There is a bill in the Senate, SB 167, which calls for total repeal. If total repeal is not feasible, we support the inclusion of a component where spending increases beyond the limitations could be challenged with a protest petition that would trigger an election. For that reason, we support House Bill 2376.

Thomas Jefferson said, "The government closest to the people serves the people best."

The prosperity of the State of Kansas is highly dependent upon the prosperity of local communities.

Thank you for your consideration.

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