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I support the HB 2424 exemption from the tax lid which excludes:

“Increases in employer contributions for social security, workers compensation, unemployment insurance, health-care costs, employee benefit plans and employee retirement and pension programs”,

My support is based upon the following facts:

\*Chautauqua County employee health insurance costs, which are part of the State of Kansas Health Plan, have increased 6% from 2015-2016 and 7% from 2016-2017. We anticipate a cost increase of at least another 7% for 2018.

\*KPERs requires a mandatory contribution from Chautauqua County (including the Death and Disability Benefit) of 9.46% for 2017 and 9.39% for 2018

These mandatory employer costs are based upon actuarial calculations of usage and statutory requirements regarding Social Security, Worker’s Compensation and Unemployment Insurance withholdings. Since these costs are not within Chautauqua County control, it is appropriate for such costs to be excluded from the tax lid.

I believe we need to look at another side of this equation also. It’s very difficult to recruit/retain employees when the rate the employee pays for their health insurance premium increases more than their wage does, couple this with increases to the cost of living...the employee LOSES money to retain their employment with us. What monies will be left to assist our employees with offsetting the costs they also have NO control over? With employee benefits included under the tax lid, I fear our most valued asset, our employees, will suffer from this legislation.

The County’s ability to provide a competitive level of wage and benefits for our valued staff is critical, if Chautauqua County is to continue to provide a high level of “customer service” to our taxpayers.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide input on HB2424.

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