



March 13, 2017

To: Chair Sen. Caryn Tyson and the Senate Assessment and Taxation Committee:
Vice Chair Sen. Dan Kerschen
Ranking Minority Member Sen. Tom Holland
Members:
Sen. Larry Alley
Sen. Jim Denning
Sen. Marci Francisco
Sen. Dan Goddard
Sen. Julia Lynn
Sen. Mike Petersen

CC: Sen. Barbara Bollier

From: Richard T. Boeshaar, Mayor, City of Mission Hills, KS

Subject: Written Testimony in Support of SB 167

Committee Members:

Thank you for the opportunity to testify regarding the proposed Senate Bill 167 to fully repeal the current law (KSA 79-2925c) that places a lid on money raised by Cities and Counties through property taxes. I am testifying on behalf of the 3,600 residents of Mission Hills in favor of repealing that law. The current law is an unnecessary overreach, interfering with municipal government control of local issues. Our representative democracy allows citizens to install or remove their representatives with an election cycle every two years. These representatives are elected to be good stewards of their municipalities and the tax dollars authorized to fund them. The citizens of Mission Hills have shown by their high voting participation that they stay informed and concerned about local issues. These voters should not have their responsibilities eroded by laws presupposing that they are uninformed or misled. One glaring flaw in the current law is its approved index of inflation. The revenue cap created by the CPI for all urban consumers is not a realistic limit for effective municipal governments. That particular CPI does not take into account cost drivers municipal governments typically face, such as healthcare for our employees, commodity costs for infrastructure improvements, equipment such as plows, mowers, police cars, utilities, etc. – all components of costs we pay whether we provide services through our own departments or through contracts with outside companies.

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The exemptions included in the revised law do not treat Kansas' Cities fairly or responsibly. Mission Hills is a fully built out residential City with no commercial properties. As such, it has no opportunity to take advantage of most of the exemptions clearly favoring cities with undeveloped land or with commercial properties that could be re-purposed. Yet continuing to succeed without either tax increases above the 5-year average of the CPI-U or expensive elections would lead this city and other cities down the path of excessive, destructive debt. Our governing body, over the past decade and a half, has successfully delivered excellent services without raising our mill levy. We prefer to pay as we go, using productivity increases and added revenues from increased property valuation, building reserves to pay for costly infrastructure repairs. This good stewardship has resulted in increased valuations, and our residents have benefitted from and appreciate that. Good legislation should incent Cities to help citizens' property values appreciate. Appreciation occurs when governing bodies create an environment in which people are motivated to relocate into our Cities. Not being able to share in the added values we are creating greatly limits further development advantageous to our citizens.

We ask that you vote for a full repeal of the tax lid legislation.