



TESTIMONY OF TOM POWELL
ON BEHALF OF UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 259 (THE WICHITA PUBLIC SCHOOLS)
IN SUPPORT OF SENATE BILL 69

BEFORE THE HOUSE ENERGY, UTILITIES AND TELECOMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE

MARCH 19, 2019

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony in support of Senate Bill 69 on behalf of the Wichita Public Schools.

First, the Wichita Public Schools agrees with the concern that the Kansas Industrial Consumers Group has raised in written testimony that high energy costs negatively impact residential consumers, schools, hospitals, and large and small businesses. A study conducted by the Wichita Public Schools confirms that the electricity rates paid by K-12 schools are among the highest in the region.

Over the years, the Wichita Public Schools has implemented many “best practices” and investments in energy efficiency to address rising utility costs. Despite best efforts, the cost of electricity services has increased dramatically for Kansas K-12 schools over the past 10 to 15 years. These utility costs are straining school districts’ already tight budgets. The school districts do not have customers to whom it can pass higher electricity costs. The money to pay for electricity rate increases must come from reductions in other parts of school district budgets.

The Wichita Public Schools believes legislative action is needed to address the high cost of electricity rates in Kansas compared to surrounding states. Senate Bill 69, if passed, will allow Kansas to study potential solutions to the high cost of electricity services in Kansas. Hopefully, solutions will lead to more competitive electricity rates in the future.

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