



Kansas Association of Chiefs of Police

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Testimony to the House Judiciary Committee In Opposition to HB2424 and HB2667

February 18, 2020

Chairman Patton and Committee Members,

I am writing to convey my personal and professional thoughts of these bills as the Police Chief of Hesston for 19 years and current President of the Kansas Association of Chiefs of Police (2019-2020). Furthermore, I write to you from the experience of an officer who has interceded in a mass casualty workplace shooting at Excel Industries in 2016 in which the assailant was killed as a result of law enforcement action.

House Bill 2424 has many unintended consequences, so much so that I do not believe it can be altered or revised in a way that would make it acceptable. The most glaring concern is that for the safety of witnesses, victims and the officer involved.

Although House Bill 2667 is an improvement to HB 2424, it has some operational problems, needs clarity and still puts citizens in jeopardy. As an example, the mandated department adopted policy shall include procedures for outside agencies to follow in the investigation. It isn't feasible to have a department policy that dictates how an outside agency is going to proceed, as the outside agency isn't bound to my department's policy. A second example has to do with notification of the next of kin prior to the investigative report being made public. This bill doesn't consider that the next of kin could also be a suspect in the crime or a related crime.

Releasing investigative reports in these cases would be reckless. The release may not cause harm in every case, but the release of investigative records could potentially isolate and identifies witnesses and other victims. Even if personal information is redacted, interested parties will figure out who cooperated with law enforcement. I fear this will erode trust in law enforcement and make it difficult to find needed cooperation when it is most needed. This would be especially true in gang violence or a terrorist/extremist group officer-involved death.

Kansas Police Chiefs believe strongly in agency transparency and the trust that transparency builds in our communities, but we oppose any bill that puts the safety of witnesses, victims and involved law enforcement officers in jeopardy. For these reasons, I urge you to reject HB 2424 and HB 2667.

Chief Douglas Schroeder (KACP President 2019-2020)
Hesston Police Department
620-327-2020