



City of Lawrence

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February 3, 2020

Senator Caryn Tyson
Chair – Senate Assessment and Taxation
Room 548-S, Statehouse
Topeka, KS 66612

Re: Senate Bill 294

Dear Senator Tyson and Committee Members,

The City of Lawrence is strongly opposed to Senate Bill 294 and urges the committee to reject this legislation. Once again, the Kansas legislature is attacking the Home Rule Authority of Kansas cities with burdensome and unneeded regulation. The bill as drafted, would require a city to send a letter at its own expense to every property owner within the city if a proposed budget exceeded the certified tax rate of the previous year and to coordinate with other county taxing jurisdictions to ensure that they are not holding a hearing on the same date.

The legislature already adopted Tax Lid legislation that requires Kansas cities to hold hearings if a proposed budget exceeds certain mill levy increases. The power to adopt a budget, set local mill levies and create strong and prosperous Kansas communities must reside with locally elected representatives who are directly accountable to voters. That is the authority the people of Kansas gave to Kansas cities in 1960 by adopting the Home Rule Amendment to the Kansas Constitution.

Senate Bill 294 does not repeal the current tax lid and the hearing process outlined in the bill creates conflicts with the tax lid processes. If the legislature wanted to provide real tax relief for Kansas municipalities and its residents – it should restore the local Ad Valorem Tax Reduction program (LAVTR) as proposed in the Governor's budget after suspending these payments for the past 17 years.

Sincerely,

Craig S. Owens
City Manager

cc: Mayor and City Commission

