



City of Lawrence

CITY MANAGER'S OFFICE

THOMAS M. MARKUS
CITY MANAGER

City Offices
PO Box 708 66044-0708
www.lawrenceks.org

6 East 6th St
785-832-3000
FAX 785-832-3405

CITY COMMISSION

MAYOR
LESLIE SODEN

COMMISSIONERS
STUART BOLEY
MATTHEW J. HERBERT
LISA LARSEN
MIKE AMYX

February 1, 2017

Senator Jacob LaTurner
Chair, Senate Committee on Federal & State Affairs
Room 144-S, Statehouse
Topeka, KS 66612

Dear Chairman LaTurner and Senate Committee on Federal & State Affairs members,

The City of Lawrence is strongly opposed to Senate Bill 76. This bill would limit local control and reduces the Home Rule Authority of Kansas municipalities. Locally elected officials are in the best position to make decisions for Kansas cities and are accountable to voters for those decisions. Senate Bill 76 takes that authority away from Kansas cities. In the past several years, the City of Lawrence has worked hard, in conjunction with our local trades and building professionals, to enact responsible licensing ordinances.

The City began licensing building contractors in 2005 with guidelines that contractors be represented by at least one qualifying individual with knowledge and experience in the construction industry; and that the company is insured at minimum levels for general liability (including completed operations) and workers compensation. Knowledge is demonstrated by possession of a 4-year degree in architecture, engineering or construction science, or successful completion of a standardized exam based on the City's adopted construction codes. Industry knowledge is supplemented by minimum experience at time of application based on the license category, and by annual continuing education. The licensing standards include flexibility to recognize alternative credentials from applicants from other licensing authorities whether within the State of Kansas or from out of state. This licensing program was developed at the request of and in collaboration with the Lawrence Home Builders Association and their contractor members.

The City's trades licensing program dates back to the 1980's in its current format, when standardized testing requirements were developed for use throughout the State. The City's trades licensing program for electrical and plumbing dates back to the 1960's prior to State standardized testing. In accordance with State of Kansas Statutes, continuing education is a component of annual renewal of licenses for the building trades (HVAC, electrical, plumbing) license holders.



Fees for these licensing programs are assessed at the minimum level to recoup costs for providing services, \$65 for contractor licenses and \$10 for trade licenses. Reducing contractor fees to \$25 would place the burden of paying for services on citizens at large rather than contractors utilizing City services.

The City of Lawrence also relies on State of Kansas licensing of design professionals to ensure code compliant construction within the City. If Senate Bill 76 were enacted it is questionable whether architects, engineers and other design professionals would continue to be required to be licensed by the Kansas State Board of Technical Professions, if they are licensed in another state. Will design professionals from other States be allowed to practice within Kansas with no oversight by the Board of Technical Professions? If so, how would they be held accountable for complying with minimum standards of design and ethical business practices?

Contractor and trades licensing, as well as licensing of design professionals by the State of Kansas Board of Technical Professions, has been instrumental in protecting the health, safety and welfare of Lawrence residents within the built environment.

We encourage you to reject passage of Senate Bill 76 as currently written, which reduces local control and curtails the Home Rule Authority of Kansas municipalities.

Sincerely,



Thomas M. Markus
City Manager