



SEDGWICK COUNTY, KANSAS

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February 19, 2024

Dear Chair Humphrics, Vice Chair Maughan, Ranking Minority Member Highberger, and Committee members:

I am writing on behalf of the Sedgwick County Board of County Commissioners in support of HB 2754 which would allow counties to charter out of the requirement to perform yearly school safety inspections currently required under K.S.A. 65-202.

Prior to 2020, counties were able to exercise home rule power under K.S.A. 19-101 *et seq.* in order to exempt themselves from the requirement to perform annual school sanitary inspections. HB 2754 would restore this option for counties. Many counties, particularly large counties, have been negatively impacted by the requirement to perform these inspections. Sedgwick County is home to the largest public school district in the state, numerous smaller districts, and a plethora of private schools. It takes a great deal of taxpayer-funded time to complete the large number of inspections currently required by law.

Sedgwick County prioritizes the safety of all of our citizens, and our schoolchildren are no exception. We also trust that our schools are best equipped to ensure that they are maintaining a safe and suitable learning environment for their students. Simply put, we do not believe that mandated governmental oversight is necessary to ensure that our school buildings are safe and sanitary. Therefore, we support HB 2754 and the ability for each county to determine what is best for their schools and constituents when it comes to school sanitary inspections.

In short, the passage of HB 2754 would not only help preserve county home rule power related to this issue, but also help avoid unnecessary governmental spending and oversight.

Thank you for considering our testimony in this matter.

Sincerely,

Ryan Baty, Chairman
Board of County Commissioners