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TIMOTHY H. JOHNSON
36TH DISTRICT

March 3, 2024

Kansas Senate Judiciary Committee
Room 419-E
State Capitol, Topeka

RE: Proponent Testimony House Bill 2583

Dear Chairwoman Warren and Committee:

Thank you for allowing me to speak on behalf of our House Bill 2583, which increases penalties for inflicting harm and or death to law enforcement canines and horses. Although I was a certified canine handler of scent dogs and owned working police canines during my 31 year law enforcement career, I would like to address the issue of inclusion of legal protection for horses for purposes of my testimony at this hearing. I supervised a strong component of mounted patrol horses and staff while Undersheriff of Wyandotte County and trained at a variety of equine law enforcement across the country.

Historically horses have been a vital part of both law enforcement and military usage all of the way through the 1920's and the depression years of the 1930's. As motorization developed more practical ways of transportation, the use of horses in law enforcement diminished, but has never gone completely away.

Horses continue to be utilized in more specific roles such as in providing search and rescue, crowd and traffic control, and ceremonial events. Horses are quick on their feet and agile. Mounted police can follow people in places where cars, motorcycles, and even bicycles may not be able to go. They can cover long distances without tiring, so usually the person(s) being chased will tire before the horse and rider.

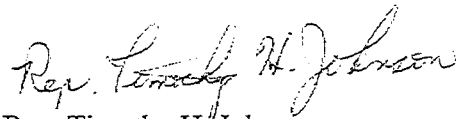
Currently the number of mounted law officers in Kansas, is not large, but as in the case of the Wichita Police, they are a valuable and highly visible community asset. Protection of police horses becomes even more important when you become aware that most law enforcement

agencies with some form of mounted unit utilize animals that actually belong to the individuals riding them. Injury or death caused by a criminal attack becomes both a personal financial and emotional loss. Attacking a law enforcement horse or a police canine is tantamount to attacking their human partner.

The police canines and horses used by law enforcement have personalities and form bonds with their handlers. They become true partners in a difficult and dangerous world and deserve a greater level of protection from those who choose not to abide by the law.

I welcome the opportunity to answer any questions the committee might have at the appropriate time.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rep. Timothy H. Johnson". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent initial "T".

Rep. Timothy H. Johnson
38th District