

Testimony
Commissioner Duane Patrick, President,
Kansas County Commissioners Association
concerning **HB 2190**
House Local Government Committee
Tuesday, February 14, 2012

Chairman Huebert and members of the Local Government Committee, I am Commissioner Duane Patrick from McPherson County, and I am serving as the 2012 President of the Kansas County Commissioners Association. Thank you for the opportunity to visit with you today about HB 2190, which provides mechanisms to impose term limitations on county commissioners.

The Kansas County Commissioners Association strongly opposes this bill for one primary reason, and that reason is that **we already have term limits! They are called elections, and for county commissioners, they are the ultimate means of accountability.** Realistically, many though not all county commissioners serve only one or two four-year terms. A few serve as county commissioners for several terms, but they are the exception and not the rule.

The primary job of a county commissioner is to listen to our constituents and balance the needs identified by the citizens we serve with the resources available to provide services. Sometimes we do that well, and when we ask to be re-elected, we receive feedback from our constituents in the form of re-election. Sometimes we do that *not so well*, in which case we are informed by our voters that someone else will take our place. And, frankly, sometimes we are not re-elected because we, like you, have to make tough decisions which may be ultimately appreciated but are not immediately appreciated by our constituents.

The troubling aspect of term limits is that they would prohibit commissioners with relatively longer service who enjoy a high level of confidence from their constituents from continuing to serve. There is value in continuing leadership in communities that is negatively impacted by term limits. Once enacted under HB 2190, term limits would apply equally to all commissioners on the board. We find it interesting that HB 2190 applies strictly to county commissioners. I do not think term limits are a particularly good idea for any position, but wonder why county commissioners are being singled out in this bill?

In summary, as President of the Kansas County Commissioners Association, I urge the committee to not advance this bill to the House floor. Allow the electoral process to work as it already does, weeding out county commissioners who lose the support of their constituents.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, for allowing me to speak today.