



House Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice  
Opposition Testimony of HB 2338  
Monday, February 20, 2017

Good Afternoon Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee. I am Kent Cornish, President/Executive Director of the Kansas Association of Broadcasters, representing nearly 265 commercial and non commercial radio and television stations across the state.

While I respect the concerns of the victims or victim's families who choose to speak at the Parole Board Hearings, these should always remain public as they have been for years. Any information the board receives in regards to making their decision whether to release – or not release an inmate – should be open to the public. They have every right to fully understand circumstances surrounding the decision that likely impacts their community.

News organizations throughout Kansas have covered public statements made by victims and their families as a way to provide all sides of a story and for their viewers, listeners and readers to come to their own conclusions. The Parole Board is a public body and like all public bodies should strive to uphold the Kansas Open Meetings Act and be accountable. Not find reasons to close portions of it.

For some reason this session there has been almost daily, a bill proposed that exempts or closes a record or meeting by a public body. That's not transparency. That's not what citizens of Kansas want. I would remind the Committee of KSA 75-4317. "Open meetings declared policy of state; In recognition of the fact that a representative government is dependent upon an informed electorate, it is declared to be the policy of this state that meetings for the conduct of governmental affairs and the transaction of governmental business be open to the public."

I respectfully ask that you oppose this bill and keep public matters public.

Thank you very much for your time.

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