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Testimony to the House Committee on Corrections & Juvenile Justice in Support of HB2581
February 13, 2018

Chairman Jennings and Committee Members,

The Johnson County Sheriff's Office supports HB2581 — Increasing the criminal penalties for the crime of giving a false alarm in certain circumstances.

“Swatting” is calling 911 and reporting a false situation to illicit an emergency response from law enforcement – usually the Special Weapons and Tactics Unit, or SWAT. One group of people that have started ‘swatting’ are video gamers. Many video games are multi-player games and the competition is in real time over the Internet/gaming system with other gamers across the United States and the world. A side attraction of these games is to “dox” another gamer. Dox is the term for documented. If you get “dox’d” it means the person doxing you has found your geographical location. Swatting is one means used to prove that they have located the gamer. There are several videos of this online. Do a google search for streaming swatting or online swatting and see what comes up.

Those that commit this crime have become sophisticated in the methods they use. The call is not usually made from a traceable number. Swatters use websites that provide false numbers, “daisy chain,” or even use apps that can be purchased or obtained online that mask phone numbers. It becomes an expensive and time-consuming investigation because digital forensic techniques are required to ascertain the criminal's identity and location. This is a highly technical field and requires specialized training.

We've all heard about these swatting incidents and the sometimes-tragic results. The Johnson County Sheriff's Office asks that you recommend HB2581 favorable for passage.

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