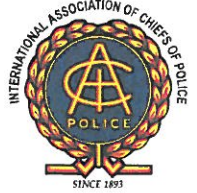




Fairway Police Department Fairway, Kansas

Michael Fleming, Chief of Police



Testimony to House Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice
In Support HB 2625
February 28, 2018

Chairman J. Russell Jennings and Members of Committee:

My name is Mike Fleming and I am the Chief of Police in Fairway, Kansas. I have been a Kansas certified police officer since 1984 and have served with the Fairway Police Department since 1989 and was appointed Chief in 2011. I serve as a Commissioner with the Kansas Commission on Police Officer Standards and Training (CPOST) and currently sit on the Investigative Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to provide written testimony in support of HB 2625 and believe the bill should move forward.

The Kansas Legislature identified the need for an agency such as CPOST to regulate and monitor the licensing of law enforcement officers who serve the people of Kansas. I believe HB 2625 will continue to give CPOST the tools needed to maintain a system that in my opinion is superior to others currently being used around the United States.

I support HB 2625 and believe it will improve public safety in Kansas by supporting and encouraging the sharing of information among law enforcement agencies and protecting unsupported allegations against any officer from hindering or prematurely ending a promising career. As the Committee is fully aware one of the purposes of the CPOST central registry is so that an agency hiring an experienced law enforcement officer from another Kansas agency can determine the circumstances of why that officer separated from that agency in the first place. I believe every Kansas law enforcement agency would expect another agency to inform them about a problem officer; however there are legal and privacy concerns about sharing that type of information with the public. Many of the complaints investigated by CPOST are without merit and lodged by someone with an agenda or attempting to tarnish the reputation of an officer, such as a defendant in a criminal case. While these complaints are investigated, release of the information could be damaging to an officer or agency if the allegations are proven false. If the complaint has merit and a certification action is taken, that information will be released under HB 2625. The passage of HB 2625 will designate CPOST records as confidential, except in certain circumstances. It is my understanding this is in line with other state boards in Kansas that are responsible for the licensing of nurses, physicians, teachers, and attorneys just to name a few.



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CPOST will continue to release final orders on any law enforcement certification action, an officer's certification status, the dates and agencies with which an officer has been employed (employment history), and CPOST training records to any agency that request them. As the Chief of a small agency I can attest to how valuable these records are in considering an applicant.

I believe if HB 2625 is not moved forward law enforcement agencies in Kansas will be reluctant to accurately document and report problem officers to CPOST under the fear that their records will not be protected. Training and education cannot be compromised; standards exist because our residents demand them and CPOST must have the means to keep our standards high.

I appreciate the opportunity to share my comments with the Committee and please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide additional information or answers any questions. I can be reached at 913-262-2364 or by e-mail at m Fleming@fairwaypd.org.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mike Fleming", written over a horizontal line.

Mike Fleming
Chief of Police
Fairway, Kansas