



**KANSAS**  
ASSOCIATION OF  
**COUNTIES**

300 SW 8th Avenue, Suite 300 • Topeka, KS 66603  
785-272-2585 • Fax 785-272-3585 • [www.kansascounties.org](http://www.kansascounties.org)

TESTIMONY OF THE KANSAS ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES  
TO THE SENATE ETHICS, ELECTION & LOCAL GOVERNMENT COMMITTEE  
ON HB 2006

MARCH 7, 2017

Chairman Bowers and Members of the Committee:

Thank you for holding a hearing on this bill. We appreciate the opportunity to offer testimony in support of HB 2006.

HB 2006 addresses the situation where the voters have elected to expand their board of county commissioners. Kansas statute allows for a public vote to expand the size of the board of commissioners, and then directs the Governor to appoint the new commissioners. A recent situation employing this statutory process was Saline County, which elected to increase its board of county commissioners from three commissioners to five commissioners, with the Governor filling those vacancies instead of the electorate.

We believe the citizens of the community served by the county commission should vote for their new commissioners. The Governor said as much when he appointed the two new commissioners in Saline County (see attached news story).

The bill was amended in the House Local Government Committee to create a special election to fill the new commissioner seats. This language is modeled on recent legislation pertaining to the special election for the fourth congressional district representative. KAC is comfortable with this model, as it achieves the same end result of allowing the people to select their county commissioners, and creates uniformity in Kansas statutes for calling a special election.

We ask that you support the legislation. Thank you for your time, and I am happy to answer any questions.

Melissa Wangemann, General Counsel

# Governor Appoints Two New County Commissioners

KSAL Staff - December 18, 2014 5:08 pm



Kansas Governor Sam Brownback Thursday named two individuals to seats on the Saline County Commission effective Jan. 12, 2015.

Luci Larson will fill the District 4 seat and David Smith is appointed to District 5. Larson is a small business owner who has previously served on the Salina City Commission and as Mayor from 2009-2010. She is active in numerous volunteer organizations. Smith has been active in Salina business since 1972, as a banker and real estate appraiser. He is active in the community and serves on several boards.

Voters in Saline County approved expansion of the county commission from three seats to five in the Nov. 4 election. This triggered a statute that requires the Governor to appoint individuals to these newly created seats within 30 days of certification of the new districts. The commissioners will then stand for election in two years.

Separate from these appointments, the Governor expressed concern about whether the statutory appointments process is truly appropriate in these circumstances. "The people of Saline County voted for this expansion of the County Commission and they should have had the right to select its new members through the electoral process," said Governor Brownback. "I believe this statute should be changed to allow the local community to choose its representatives."