



Kansas State Lodge

Fraternal Order of Police

Testimony in Support of House Bill 2581

(Written Only Testimony)

Crime of Giving a False Alarm

Presented to the Senate Committee on Judiciary

By: Mik Shanks

Kansas State Lodge of the Fraternal Order of Police

March 13, 2018

Chairman Wilborn, Vice Chair Lynn, Ranking Minority Member Haley and Committee members, on behalf of the Kansas State Lodge Fraternal Order of Police thank you for allowing us to offer testimony in support of HB 2581, which increases the penalty for someone convicted of the crime of giving a false alarm. With emerging technologies "swatting," has developed as a serious problem involving remotely contacting 9-1-1 and intentionally falsifying an emergency in order to evoke a high level of emergency response from law enforcement, often times involving a SWAT team. "Swatting" uses technology to purposely deceive authority and often attempt to make it appear an emergency call is coming from the victim's phone. Sometimes swatting is done for revenge, sometimes as a prank. Either way, it is a serious crime. The callers intentionally place both their targeted victims as well as the emergency responders in immediate danger. The callers often tell tales of hostages about to be executed or bombs about to go off. Community welfare is also placed in jeopardy as first responders rush to the scene, taking them away from real emergencies.

In the past 12 months, I have personally responded to three full blown swatting incidents, all of which had the potential to result in deadly consequences. Fortunately, each of these incidents were safely resolved when first responders determined they were false reports. But this barely scratches the surface. These events are not infrequent and isolated as many may believe. Unfortunately only the most traumatic "swattings" are publicized. Falsified alarms come in many forms and are reported in varying levels. These calls vary from attempts to play a joke to intentionally orchestrated plots.

As front line emergency responders we work diligently to determine and separate what are real and what are falsified alarms. We do not have the option to simply dismiss any report of an emergency. These determinations are sometimes made in split seconds and we do our utmost best to resolve matters in the field. Now is the time to make this misbehavior distasteful for anyone possibly considering it and punishable for those who unlawfully engage in it. We are working hard to combat this on the front-end and we encourage you to combat it on the back-end.

The Kansas Fraternal Order of Police Lodge is strongly in support of House Bill 2581 and urge passage. Thank you for allowing my testimony.