



Kansas State Lodge

Fraternal Order of Police

**Testimony to the
House Committee on Commerce, Labor and Economic Development
House Bill 2586
Mik Shanks, President
Kanas State Fraternal Order of Police
February 12, 2020**

Chairperson Tarwater and members of the Committee,

Thank you for allowing this written testimony in opposition of House Bill 2586. My name is Mik Shanks and I am the President of the Kansas State Lodge of the Fraternal Order of Police. On behalf of all 3,900 members of FOP Lodges throughout Kansas, I am writing in strong opposition of House Bill 2586.

The current collection of dues, via payroll, deduction allow access to seemingly dormant yet critical benefits for our membership. Given the dangerous nature of their jobs, a vast majority of our members are enrolled in the National FOP Legal Defense Plan that provides legal aid to our members if they are involved in critical incidents. Participation in the Legal Defense Plan allow members have pre-paid access to attorneys for advice in navigating through the difficult processes that is inherently part and parcel to any involvement in a critical incident. Additionally, dues collected by payroll deduction allow local Lodges to enroll their members in Group Life Insurance Policies that provide added protection to our members in case they are forced to pay the ultimate price for serving our community.

The collective membership dues obtained through payroll deduction are delivered to the local Lodges who then directly pay different benefit vendors such as Group Life Insurance Company and the Legal Defense Plans among others. These companies provide significant discounts for group rates. The local Lodges ensure the funds are properly forwarded to entities that provided group benefits to our members. Removing the ability to join these vendors at group rates, forces members to join these plans as individuals and negates any possible discount they would receive for enrolling as a part of a larger group. This will certainly increase costs to individuals, who may opt to not participate in this critical coverage. The scenario is quite feasible that an individual would be involved in a critical incident and need the benefits of either Insurance or Legal Defense and their reason for not having these protections is because direct payroll deduction was not available for them.

House Bill 2586 would allow membership to be dropped without prior notice. This makes a logistical nightmare for the local Lodge treasurers and secretaries. The local Lodge treasurers and secretaries who handle the logistics of collecting dues are active law enforcement officers who volunteer for these positions and they receive no compensation for their important work. Implementation of this bill would create an undue administrative burden on them, having to retrace member rolls from local government finance departments to determine who has dropped and when it occurred. This can make an already difficult job nearly impossible.



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Membership to the FOP is not mandatory and individuals presently have opportunity to join or resign at will, therefore, making this statutory change unnecessary. Though each local lodge's by-laws are different, most FOP Lodges allow for a set time during the year to withdraw their membership. For instance, in many lodges, members voluntarily agree to an eleven (11) month commitment to pay dues and are given the opportunity to withdraw their membership during December of each year. This gives them a thirty (30) day time period to withdraw and allows the treasurers and secretaries of the Local Lodges to receive all withdraws at one time. Financial or personal hardships are always handled within the organization and local lodges invariably provide member support so that the members can retain benefits without loss of surety.

Thank you for your time in reviewing my testimony. The FOP State Lodge and its members oppose the passage of this bill.