

To: House Committee on Corrections and Juvenile Justice

From: John Goodyear, Staff Attorney

Date: March 11, 2020

RE: Support for SB 45

I want to thank Chairman Jennings and the members of the Committee for affording the League of Kansas Municipalities the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 45.

SB 45 increases the felony distinction and penalties for involuntary manslaughter, battery, and aggravated battery when those acts are committed against public safety sector employees while they are engaged in their official duties. This amendment to current law would serve to add additional protection to those tasked with making Kansas communities safer and more secure like law enforcement, fire fighters, emergency service providers, and public works departments. Additionally, the bill provides this added protection from battery and aggravated battery to those not employed in the public safety sector who are acting under the direction of a law enforcement officer.

One of the realities of working as a public safety sector employee is that in order to fulfill the responsibilities of the job, often you will be exposed to dangerous conditions and subjected to increased risk of serious harm. SB 45 takes that heightened risk into account and seeks to minimize it by increasing penalties to those that cause harm to those workers seeking to make our communities safer.

Ultimately, there is no way to completely eliminate the risk that these workers will encounter as they do their jobs, but SB 45 takes positive a step toward decreasing that risk. It is the League's belief that these increased penalties will serve to make these employees and our cities safer, and it is for that reason that we support the passage of this bill.

The League supports the amendments that SB 45 makes to current law and respectfully ask this Committee to pass the bill to the full House for consideration.