

To: The House Committee on Judiciary
From: Daniel Yoza, Assistant City Attorney, City of Olathe
Subject: Testimony in Opposition to 2018 HB 2219
Date: February 18, 2019



Dear Committee Members,

Please consider this letter our testimony in opposition to House Bill 2219.

This bill requires any public body or agency subject to the Kansas Open Meetings Act to record audio or video of open meetings and to make such recordings accessible to the public within 24 hours.

The City of Olathe is committed to transparency and openness in government. Currently, the Olathe City Council and Planning Commission meetings are video recorded and posted on the City's website. Producing and recording these meeting recordings costs the City about \$22,500 annually.

The City has 14 boards, commissions, councils, and committees that are subject to the Kansas Open Meetings Act. The volunteers that serve in these groups do valuable work for the City. Examples include the Library Advisory Board, which helps shape policies for our library, the Police Advisory Council, which serves as a liaison between the community and the Police Department, and the Human Relations Commission, which works to foster diversity and inclusion in the City.

Many of these 14 groups do not meet at City Hall, or places with recording equipment. Additionally, under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), public video broadcasts must be closed captioned. Producing recordings and posting them on the internet would create additional website and information technology costs, as the City is currently only set up to record City Council and Planning Commission meetings.

If this bill passes and becomes law we would have to temporarily suspend these meetings until we can find a way to record and publish them. We estimate these additional costs to be about \$50,000 annually. This is unnecessary, as the public is welcome to come to these meetings. The current provisions of the Kansas Open Meetings Act are sufficient to allow transparency to the public, without excessively burdening public entities.

For the above reasons we express our opposition to House Bill 2219 and ask you to not advance the bill.

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions or if you would like further information.

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