

I am writing this email as a concerned citizen of Douglas County, KS and specifically Lawrence to state that HB 2717 should be struck down for the following reasons:

1. **HB 2717 is government overreach.** The residents of Lawrence and their elected commissioners and mayor know our community first-hand and are the best judge of its needs. We are perplexed that elected officials in Topeka who constantly complain about government overreach and are proponents of small government would at the same time choose to legislate like Big Brother and dictate to a municipality that they know better than we do what are good solutions for our people.

2. **HB 2717 will exacerbate worker shortages.** The news is filled these days with complaints about a labor shortage. HB 2717 would certainly not help as it would inevitably scare away workers, especially in low wage jobs where employers are currently most desperate for them. Keep in mind that many immigrant families are of mixed status, with both citizen and immigrant members, but an unwelcoming and threatening climate will scare entire families into leaving the state just as we are undertaking major new incentive programs to attract large-scale new business in both eastern and western Kansas.

3. **HB 2717 creates an unfunded state mandate on local police to enforce federal law even though our police are already stretched with local mental health, gun violence and substance abuse cases.** Immigration law is federal law. There is neither funding for nor any requirement that local police or sheriffs enforce or cooperate in the enforcement of immigration law, actions for which they are not trained. Our ordinance in fact does not ban cooperation with federal immigration authorities if the public safety is at risk. We are asking our local law enforcement to delineate between federal law, criminal violations and civil violations as well as put our community first regardless of citizenship status.

4. **HB 2717 would harm public safety by increasing unreported crime and lack of cooperation with police and courts.** When local police and sheriffs do turn residents over to ICE or share information with ICE on people whom they suspect are unauthorized immigrants, it has a very chilling effect on public safety which is local law enforcement's primary responsibility. Immigrants, whether legally present or not, fear the police and do not call them to report crimes. Thus, domestic violence, auto theft, employment violations, and a myriad of other crimes experienced by residents, over 28,000 of whom are foreign-born continue unabated because the victims don't trust the police or the justice system.

House Bill 2717 therefore is a bill which actually harms the public safety by forcing our police to engage in activities that they are not only not trained or funded for but also that would undercut their effectiveness in the activities which are their primary mission – protecting the public, enforcing our state and municipal laws, and making us all feel safe. The experience of Arizona after HB1070 was enacted bears this out. There was a marked increase in racial profiling, discrimination, and even false arrests as well as greatly increasing fear of police and sheriffs and therefore a failure to report crime. This of course leads to increased risk from crime for all of us. Because of this, District Attorney Mark Dupree endorsed the Safe and Welcoming ordinance, and neither Police Chief Carl Oakman nor Sheriff Daniel Soptic opposed the ordinance.

**5. The Municipal ID already has clear penalties for ID fraud (this applies to our neighbors in Wyandotte County who recently passed an amazing ordinance!).** Furthermore, the ID will be clearly labeled as a Municipal and not a State ID and does not also need to have additional language added stating as such.

**6. The failure of the federal government to pass immigration reform and the limbo in which many immigrants live without any kind of legal redress to their status is why cities and states are left trying to build community and economy in a confusing and impossible quagmire.** The solution is to put more pressure on Congress to legislate rather than preempt cities who are only trying to do what's best for their diverse communities.

Much more than all of this, we need to have clear ways for our communities to advocate for themselves, and the state government forcing its policy onto communities is in direct contrast to that. Please allow us to determine what we see fit.

Sincerely,

Gabi Sprague