

Dear Chairman Barker and members of the Committee on Federal and State Affairs,

My Name is Naomi Tolentino, I am a Kansas City KS resident, voter, and educator for the Kansas City Kansas Public Schools and the president of Advocates for Immigrant Rights and Reconciliation (AIRR). I am opposed to HB 2717 for the following reasons:

At AIRR, we are committed to empowering and uplifting the voices of the immigrant community and providing them with the tools they need to better protect themselves and their families. We have a secure line where families can call and ask for support. One of the things we have learned is that immigrants, whether legally present or not, fear the police and do not call them to report crimes. Because of this, we know that **HB 2717 would harm public safety by increasing unreported crime and lack of cooperation with police and courts.** We can not let this happen in our community.

House Bill 2717 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.<sup>1</sup> 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.

The citizens of Kansas voted to become a Home Rule state, House Bill 2717 goes against it. Wyandotte County is a very unique city and the residents, their elected commissioners and mayor know our community first-hand and are the best judge of its needs. It comes to a surprise that the 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.

February 10<sup>th</sup> by the Wyandotte County Board of Commissioners of the Safe and Welcoming City Act. The Act will provide a municipal photo ID to the thousands of residents of Wyandotte County who have no ID and to others who would like an ID showing they live in Wyandotte County. This passed after the community made their voice heard and expressed to their local leaders the importance of this ordinance. The community agrees that this ordinance is needed to move Kansas City, Kansas forward.

I opposed HB 2717 and I hope you listen to the community.

Sincerely,

Naomi Tolentino,

Board Chair, Advocates for Immigrants Rights and Reconciliation