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**Testimony to the House Committee on Federal and State Affairs
In Support of HB2717**

March 15, 2022

Chairman Barker and Committee Members:

Our associations recognize the importance of a trusting relationship with all segments of the communities our members serve. No where is that more important than for victims and witnesses of crime to come forward with information to support investigations and prosecute those responsible for crimes. We also recognize that many of our immigrant communities are victimized by members of those same communities, and we hear from those communities their desire to hold those criminals accountable. This creates the need for balancing how we deal with immigration issues within those communities. We further recognize that while the majority of immigrants in our communities are not engaged in state criminal acts, the smaller numbers within those communities victimizing others create problems for the entire immigrant communities. As a result, we believe there must be a balance that allows us to utilize federal enforcement tools and resources against those that are victimizing others in our communities. Our support of HB2717 is based on the need to engage and cooperate with federal enforcement action against those who are harming others in our communities.

HB2707 would prohibit municipalities from placing law enforcement in a catch-22 position between violating local ordinance or concealing unlawful acts under federal law thereby obstructing federal investigations. We must be able to freely exchange information with federal authorities especially when the person violating federal law is victimizing members of our communities.

We do have two concerns with the bill as written.

1. We believe section 3, subsection (b) is unnecessary and should be stricken.
2. We also believe that section 5 needs to be restructured. As provided in the bill, we would be prevented from communicating with federal authorities with "regard to. . .national origin." It would be very difficult to communicate with anyone about immigration issues without referencing national origin in some fashion. We believe the intent of this subsection is that we would not pursue immigration inquiries based solely on the person's race, religion, gender, ethnicity or national origin without other evidence of a violation of law. We agree with that intent.

We have discussed these concerns with the Attorney General, and we understand they will be recommending an amendment to strike section 3 subsection (b) and to replace section 5 with a reference to existing racial profiling laws. We support that change.

We urge you to accept the amendments as outlined above as recommended by the Attorney General and to move the bill forward favorably.

Sheriff Jeff Easter, Sedgwick County
KSA Legislative Committee Chair