



Sedgwick County...
working for you

Division of Finance

525 N. Main, Suite 823, Wichita, KS 67203 - www.sedgwickcounty.org - TEL: 316-660-7591 - FAX: 316-383-7729

Lindsay Poe Rousseau
Chief Financial Officer

January 7, 2021

Chair Tyson and members of the Committee. My name is Lindsay Poe Rousseau and I am the Chief Financial Officer for Sedgwick County. I would like to submit testimony on behalf of Sedgwick County in support of this bill but with some important adjustments for you to consider.

1. Please make the law effective January 1, 2022 (for the 2023 budget process). We are currently dealing with the ongoing challenges of Covid and this would give us much needed time to adjust to the new calendar. In addition, there will be software changes needed in order to calendar and certify the revenue neutral rate for each tax district as part of the valuation estimate process. As of now, our County Clerk will have a very small turnaround time to make this determination.
2. Under this bill, eleven data points for each taxing entity are required on the notification letter. Similar to issuing the first half tax bill, we calculate this annual printing and mailing cost to be around \$150,000. Please consider alternative options to view this information such as allowing us to send a postcard informing taxpayers where they can view the information that will be less costly to Sedgwick County taxpayers.
3. This bill would require the County Commission to approve the rate/levy at the conclusion of the public hearing, on or before September 10. After the public hearing, County budget staff needs appropriate time to review, analyze and make adjustments based on the public comment. An alternative is to require that the governing body vote on such a resolution before adopting the budget, but not necessarily the day of the hearing – this would be similar to what we do for the Fire District, a special district, in compliance with current truth in taxation requirements.
4. Under the current bill, the BOCC must hold the public hearing and vote on the property tax rate by September 10. We are then required to certify the budget to the County Clerk by September 20. We would like additional time to certify the budget to the County Clerk and propose that this deadline be September 24—giving us two weeks from the September 10 deadline.
5. Add in the historically allowed adjustments when calculating the ‘revenue neutral’ rate. These adjustments include the value of new improvements and property that has changed in use. We do not believe that these improvements should be considered when determining the tax levy increase. With an increase in growth, there is the need for additional County services, which in turn requires additional taxes.

Thank you for your consideration of this testimony.