

To: Senate Judiciary

From: Erik Sartorius, Executive Director

Date: February 19, 2021

RE: SB 220 Proponent Testimony

I want to thank Chairwoman Warren and the members of the Committee for affording the League of Kansas Municipalities the opportunity to provide testimony in support of SB 220.

SB 220 amends Kansas' law to increase penalties for battery against a utility worker. Examples of workers would include those supporting electric, natural gas, water, and broadband or cable, as well as utility line clearance or line locate workers. The protection extends to both private and public employees.

Many of these workers, as we have seen these past few weeks, put themselves at personal risk as they work in inclement conditions to keep critical systems working for residents and businesses. Despite their work being to help situations, they can become targets of people's frustrations when utilities are not operating correctly, as they are the incarnation of the utility with who someone is frustrated.

We ask that this Committee advance the bill to the full Senate in order to protect these workers.