

Senate Committee on Local Government

Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 118

Presented by Eric Stafford, Vice President of Government Affairs

Tuesday, February 9, 2021

Madam Chair and members of the committee, my name is Eric Stafford, Vice President of Government Affairs for the Kansas Chamber. The Kansas Chamber represents small, medium and large businesses of all industry segments across the state. We appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 118, which creates a streamlined process to allow for easier consolidation of special districts (defined in the bill) by cities. This bill is the same as HB 2510 that was heard and passed by the House last year, but unfortunately was lost due to the early shutdown.

According to governing.com, citing 2017 US Census Bureau data, states with the most counties, cities, towns and other general local governments are:

- Illinois
- Minnesota
- Pennsylvania
- Ohio
- Kansas
- Wisconsin
- Michigan
- North Dakota
- Indiana
- New York

With Kansas in the top five for total number of local governments (3,897 total entities and 1,799 special districts), and a stagnant population pattern statewide, local governments in areas where the population continues to decline will be faced with hard decisions. Any assistance the Legislature could offer to help create more efficient government to benefit taxpayers, we express our support. SB 118 helps cities and special districts merge by eliminating the need for legislative approval. Another positive step would be to apply the same streamlined ability included in SB 118 to counties.

We appreciate the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 118, and I am happy to answer any questions at the appropriate time.