

Testimony: HB 2059-Operation of Secondhand Stores

Madam Chairman, Members of the Committee: HB 2059 represents an opportunity to enable law enforcement help victims who have had their property stolen from them.

I wanted to explain to you a little about my background. I am married, the father of two and I have been a Lawrence Police Officer since 1991 and a Detective since 1994. Although the following testimony represents my (and many of my colleagues) experiences, they do not necessarily represent the governing body of the City of Lawrence. This testimony simply represents the experience of many who work in the area and deal with the every day and very real life issues this bill seeks to address.

Note:

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics about 11.7 million property thefts occurred in the United States in 2009. About 95.7 per 1,000 households experienced property thefts during this period. The National Institute of Corrections reported that in 2008 property crimes accounted for around 89.1% of the crime rate in Kansas; which is about 5% higher than the national average.

One of the issues facing law enforcement; which this bill aims to address, is the tracking of stolen property. Many of the current pawn laws address the purchasing of used and or second hand property for businesses defined as Pawn Stores. However, Craigslist, Ebay, and other retail outlets for used property have helped create a host of new businesses such as those that purchase and sell used games, game consoles, music, music devices such as popular iPods and other MP3 players etc. Some of these businesses do a great job of tracking the items they purchase, what they paid for the item, the serial number (if it has one) of the item they purchased and who they purchased the item from; with proper identification. On the other hand some of these businesses do not keep records of any kind and are reluctant to share any information they do collect about their transactions with law enforcement.

The main problem we are facing is the lack of documentation when it comes to solving auto and residential burglaries, which in some cases can involve a large number of crimes in a single night. The trend, in the burglaries over the last couple of years, is that the burglars take iPods, mp3 players, phones, GPS units, CDs, video games, backpacks containing text books and other items to second hand shops and sell the items far below what they are worth. In some instances businesses will buy these items for between \$3 and \$20, and then mark up the price to make a profit. Some of these businesses have paid \$50 for ten video games, which cost \$20 to \$50 per game. Most of the victims in these cases have complained they cannot make an insurance claim because the total loss is under