



To: House Local Government Committee
From: Kim Winn, Deputy Director
Date: February 7, 2012
Re: Summary Ordinance Publication

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today to discuss the issue of ordinance publication. Over the summer and fall, we sat down with the Kansas Press Association to work on a compromise which would address this unfunded mandate in a reasoned and fair manner. We are pleased to report that the two associations came to agreement and we offer that agreement for your consideration.

Kansas is one of only six states that still requires publication of the full text of ordinances. Most other states either do not require publication at all, or they allow for a summary form to be published rather than the full text. In 2011, Kansas cities spent in excess of \$2.5 million to comply with publication mandates. Based on a recent survey that we conducted, we estimate that over \$1 million was spent in 2011 to publish city ordinances.

Ordinances are Unique. Under current law, cities must publish ordinances in their entirety in the newspaper in order for the ordinance to become effective. Counties and school districts are not required to publish resolutions, which are the equivalent of an ordinance. Therefore, the burden of publishing local laws in this manner currently only falls on cities. In addition, there is no aspect of prior public notice for ordinances. The publication occurs after the governing body action to adopt the ordinance has already occurred. There is no opportunity for a petition or hearing following publication, so the publication is really just a triggering mechanism.

Allows for Better Notice for Citizens. Allowing a city the option of publishing a summary of an ordinance in a newspaper and making full copies available free of charge on the Internet and at city hall actually increases notice to the public. No longer will a citizen have to purchase a newspaper on a given day and sort through the fine print of the legal section in order to review such publications. Instead, they will be posted on a searchable website, for everyone to see, free of charge, anytime day or night. In addition, a summary of the primary purpose of an ordinance provides better notice than a lengthy word-for-word document filled with legalese.

Saves Taxpayer Dollars. Budgets at all levels of government are tight and elected officials are looking for ways to provide services in the most efficient manner possible. This agreement would give cities the option of utilizing technology in order to save taxpayer dollars.

We thank you in advance for your consideration and we would be happy to stand for questions at the appropriate time.