



KANSAS
ASSOCIATION OF
COUNTIES

Testimony

concerning **SB 109**

Presented by Commissioner Kimberly Skillman-Robrahn

Coffey County

Senate Ethics, Elections and Local Government Committee

Monday, February 11, 2013

Thank you, Chairman Pyle, for the opportunity to appear before the committee today and testify in opposition to SB 109. I am Kimberly Skillman-Robrahn, a Coffey County Commissioner, and I am the Vice President of the Governing Board of the Kansas Association of Counties. I also chair the KAC's Legislative Policy Committee.

SB 109 would have a chilling effect on state-county relations and our mutual ability to do our jobs to best serve our citizens. I am a citizen commissioner on the Board of Coffey County Commissioners and I take my responsibilities as a county commissioner very seriously. I devote the time and energy to my elected office as necessary. I work on behalf of my citizens and respond to their needs and concerns, just like you do as representatives of the people. *What I do not have time to do on a continual basis* is to drive to Topeka to watch the legislative process unfold each day (hour). Rather, I rely, as do most county commissioners as well as other elected county officials and our department heads, on the information gleaned by the staff of the Kansas Association of Counties, and other organizations representing county officials, to inform us so we can communicate (either directly or through these groups) how proposed bills would affect our county(s). SB 109 would stifle the **very kind of communication we need** between the State and counties, which allows all of us to be most effective and judicious in our use of precious public resources.

Counties and the State share important responsibilities for important services for our citizens. In several examples we are not the sole service provider, nor is the State. Instead, we ***share responsibility***. Here are some prominent examples:

1. Judicial branch, in which the State pays for the salaries and benefits of district court judges while the counties pay for facilities and support costs for the district court system. Counties are also responsible for the salaries and benefits and office costs related to the prosecutorial function. Although cases are brought in the name of "the State of Kansas versus _____," counties are responsible for the costs related to these prosecutions.
2. Mental health services, services for physically and developmentally disabled Kansans, and services to the frail elderly Kansans are all shared responsibilities. We need to know what the Legislature is contemplating with regard to social services and you need to know our thinking as well.
3. Public Health services. While the State's Director of Health is the state equivalent of the surgeon general, local boards of county commissioners are, by statute, the local