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**Testimony to the House Corrections and Juvenile Justice Committee
In Support of HB2049 – Crimes Committed Against a Law Enforcement Officer**

January 23, 2017

Chairman Jennings and Committee Members,

Our associations support HB2049 enhancing penalties for crimes committed against a law enforcement officer who is engaged in the performance of duty, or because of such officer's status as a law enforcement officer. Nationally, assaults on and homicides of law enforcement officers are rising. There have been incidents of officers victimized while off-duty in shootings, arsons, criminal damage, threats, etc. Some of those cases investigation has revealed the officers were targeted only because of their profession with no other preceding interactions. Recently a captain on the Topeka Police Department received threats of physical harm to him and his family indicating they would be targeted while the officer was off duty. Vandalized personal vehicles or homes is not uncommon.

An attack on a law enforcement officer, on duty or off duty, when committed because of their position or because the officer is carrying out their duty is an attack on the government and on the people in our communities and state. For that reason, an enhanced penalty is justified.

Our hope is this bill would provide a deterrence of these crimes from occurring. But if prevention fails, the added penalty is reasonable.

We urge you to take this step to protect those that protect us. Please recommend HB2049 favorably for passage.

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