

**Pastor Roderick Houston Testimony**  
**Kansas House Corrections and Juvenile**  
**HB 2352**  
**February 20, 2017**

Chairman Jennings and my esteemed colleagues, thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony in support of HB 2352.

My name is Roderick Houston; I am the Senior Pastor of the Mt. Olive Tabernacle of Praise Church in Wichita, where I have served for the last 12 years. I am also a 2 term former State Representative for House District 89 in Northeast Wichita and although I did not seek re-election this past year, I am still very much involved in serving the community in which I reside.

Over the past 27 years, which includes 20+ years as a Safety Services Officer in the Wichita Public Schools and as a minister and community leader, I have been afforded the opportunity serve people from many diverse backgrounds and ethnicities concerning numerous issues that concern the well-being of our community. HB 2352 is one such issue.

I was made aware by some of the constituents in our community that there have been several good, qualified individuals who are being denied employment as law enforcement officers because of their past juvenile records. All of the individuals that I am aware of have reformed their behavior, have not reoffended and have become upstanding citizens as they are now adults and are all past their 21<sup>st</sup> birthdays. As an African American male, who understands the consequences of making some bad decisions as a adolescent, I stand here today as a living witness that ‘your past does not have to define your future.’ If the credibility of my character were still being questioned because of some of the decisions that I made as juvenile, I would never have been able to accomplish some of the things I have done as an adult or have multiple careers in public service that I have enjoyed for almost 30 years and serving as a public elected official would have conceivably been impossible.

Therefore after conferring with various law enforcement officials and the Sedgwick County District Attorney concerning HB 2352, it is our concurring opinion that the existing K.S.A. 60-421 be repealed and amended as submitted, with the amendment to clarify that if a person was adjudicated for a non-felony, low severity grid level crime and has modified their conduct and not re-offended, their juvenile record should not be held against them as an adult. Also, if an individual committed a crime of dishonesty as a juvenile and turns 21 years of age or goes 5 years after they turn 18, the adjudication should no longer be considered material and should not affect the credibility of the witness.

I ask that we no longer hold good people hostage due to their past indiscretions and allow them the opportunity to fully and freely engage in Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.

Again thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of HB 2352. I will stand for questions.

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