

To: Chairman Williams, Vice Chair Thimesch, Ranking Minority Member Alcalá and members of the House Committee on Local Government

From: Joe Seiwert, Representative, 101st District

Date: February 14, 2017

Re: Proponent Testimony – House Bill 2247

I'm here before you to testify as a proponent on HB2247, an act concerning legal publications, and authorizing the use of internet websites for legal publications.

What the bill does is simple. It lets any government agency that are required to publish legal records, or private businesses also, to either publish in the local newspaper of general circulation or may be fulfilled by publication on an internet web site that:

- 1) Is the official internet website for the board or entity or has been selected by the board or entity to be the official publication source for such board or entity;
- 2) Is not password protected;
- 3) Is accessible to members of the general public;
- 4) Does not have any fee associated with or charged for accessing the website.

This idea is not new and has been introduced before in the past. I intend to show in my testimony how waiting several years has even proven the need for this change in modern technology. When publishing became required, print media was the only thing available at the time. In today, there is all kinds of media, social, twitter, messaging, Facebook, and the list goes on and on and on. Government agencies already use most of this technology in their day to day record keeping, filing, and data storage and backup.

If we are truly going to try to cut government spending, then we also need to help make it easy for agencies to cut spending also. We can do this by reviewing old outdated statutes and updating the reporting and publishing requirements to the current technology of today. We need to make it easy for government agencies in line with what every other business uses, including the publishing industry. The internet and social media.

Now I'm sure you will hear that this will hide transparency, make it hard for taxpayers to find information, and make it easy for government cover-ups. Wrong, this bill will make transparency much easier for anyone to access public legal notices. Right now, it is published in a newspaper somewhere, but which one, what city, or you must subscribe to it, or go to the library to search for hours to find it if you are lucky enough to even find it in 30 minutes. If you have a computer, iPhone, smart phone, or anything that has access to google, all you have to do is type or speak, "Reno county government legal publications," or go to the county's web site and search whatever you are looking for by voice or typed search, and believe it or not, it's free to the taxpayers. It takes less than 10 seconds. Now I'm also sure you will hear not everyone has a smart phone. According to the Pew Research Center, 68% of all adults in the United States own a smart phone, up 35% from four years ago. Also, according to Pew Research

Center again, 87% of American households have access to the internet in their homes. If you are in the minority of Americans who don't have a smart phone or internet, you can go to the local library and use theirs. Similarly, you can go to the library if you don't have a newspaper subscription to every county you want to do business with to look up legal publication.

Now, on the other hand, if we look at newspaper subscriptions in the last several years, there is a drop in circulation from when the first bill was introduced in 2013 (see attached copy of "Circulation of Daily Newspapers in Kansas 2011, 2013 and 2015). You might find this information of use. Circulation of daily newspapers in Kansas continues to fall and far more people now have access to the internet than to newspapers. Consider the Wichita Eagle, with daily circulation of 46,899, or down from 67,003 in 2013, and Sunday circulation of 71,768, or down from 100,199 in 2013. Wichita's population is about 387,000...meaning that Sunday circulation is only about 19% of the city. It's worse, because some of the circulation reaches outside the city limits. Topeka's Sunday circulation is only 27,882 which is down from 33,425 in 2013, or – about 22% of the population. The Hutchinson News, which covers numerous counties, circulation is only 21,050, down from 31,095 in 2013. So, as you can see, social media, internet, or other forms of digital media have almost doubled in the last 4 years, while printed newspaper circulation has decreased by 25-35% in the last 4 years.

Now let's talk how much it will save counties, cities, townships, schools, or any government agency that must publish legal notices. I have attached a copy of the "Annual Amount Spent on Publishing Information in Newspapers" by county, and only 67 counties, or 64% reporting was still \$1,665,970 million in taxpayer's money and only have a circulation of around 19-22% of some of the largest population centers, which is not very good.

I am here today as a proponent to HB2247. You will probably think it will put a strain on the publishing industry, but, what industry is not struggling right now and are having a strain put on their budgets and year end statements. It's not because of the tax cuts, it's because of the downturn in the economy. Look at agriculture prices, gas and oil, manufacturing, not to mention government agencies. I believe this just makes good sense, cost savings, and most important transparency for the taxpayers to access public records.

In closing, I hope you will consider passing HB2247 out favorable for passage. It will save the taxpayers money, businesses money, and government agencies money. We're not here to pick winners or losers, we are here to keep up with the technology and information age and make it easy for agencies to use the technology they already have, to save money, and give the taxpayers transparency at their fingertips.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I will stand for questions at the appropriate time.

Joe Seiwert

**Circulation of Daily Newspapers in Kansas
2011, 2013, and 2015**

City	Newspaper	Established	Issued*	2011	2013	2015
Abilene	<i>Abilene Reflector-Chronicle</i>	1873	Mon. - Sat.	3,935	3,935	3,935
Arkansas City	<i>Arkansas City Traveler</i>	1870	Tues. - Sat.	4,832	4,832	4,832
Atchison	<i>Atchison Globe</i>	1877	Mon. - Sun.	3,293	3,293	-
Augusta	<i>Augusta Daily Gazette</i>	1893	Mon. - Fri.	2,247	2,247	-
Chanute	<i>The Chanute Tribune</i>	1892	Tues. - Sat.	4,359	3,900	4,359
Clay Center	<i>The Clay Center Dispatch</i>	1873	Mon. - Fri.	3,200	3,200	2,300
Coffeyville	<i>The Coffeyville Journal</i>	1875	Mon., Wed., Fri.	4,103	4,103	4,103
Colby	<i>Colby Free Press</i>	1888	Mon., Wed. - Fri.	1,588	1,588	1,954
Concordia	<i>Concordia Blade-Empire</i>	1902	Mon. - Fri.	2,357	2,357	2,357
Council Grove	<i>Council Grove Republican</i>	1872	Mon. - Fri.	2,150	2,150	2,150
Dodge City	<i>Dodge City Daily Globe</i>	1878	Tues. - Sat.	9,700	9,700	9,700
El Dorado	<i>The El Dorado Times</i>	1882	Mon. - Fri.	3,396	3,396	-
Emporia	<i>The Emporia Gazette</i>	1890	Mon. - Sat.	6,355	6,355	5,746
Fort Scott	<i>The Fort Scott Tribune</i>	1884	Tues. - Sat.	3,289	3,289	3,289
Garden City	<i>The Garden City Telegram</i>	1906	Mon. - Fri.; Sun.	7,432	7,432	7,432
Great Bend	<i>Great Bend Tribune</i>	1876	Sat.	7,966	7,966	7,966
			Tues. - Fri.	6,282	6,282	5,977
Hays	<i>The Hays Daily News</i>	1929	Sun.	6,134	6,134	5,977
			Mon. - Fri.	11,000	11,000	9,500
Hiawatha	<i>Hiawatha World</i>	1908	Sun.	11,300	11,300	9,500
Hutchinson	<i>The Hutchinson News</i>	1872	Tues., Fri.	2,300	2,300	-
			Mon. - Fri.	31,095	31,095	21,050
			Sat.	31,095	31,095	21,050
			Sun.	33,472	33,472	23,502
Independence	<i>Independence Daily Reporter</i>	1881	Tues. - Fri.; Sun.	6,654	6,654	6,654
Iola	<i>Iola Register</i>	1875	Mon. - Thur.; Sat.	3,750	3,750	3,750
Junction City	<i>The Daily Union</i>	1861	Tues. - Fri.	3,500	3,500	2,604
			Sat.	4,050	4,050	2,770
Kansas City	<i>Kansas City Kansan</i>	1921	Tues. - Fri.	8,000	8,000	-
			Sat.	8,065	8,065	-
Larned	<i>The Tiller & Toiler</i>	1892	Mon. - Fri.	1,434	1,434	-
Lawrence	<i>Lawrence Journal-World</i>	1891	Mon. - Sat.	27,813	27,813	19,356
			Sun.	28,630	28,630	21,055
Leavenworth	<i>The Leavenworth Times</i>	1857	Tues. - Fri.	5,608	5,608	4,020
			Sat.	6,318	6,318	4,100
Liberal	<i>The Leader & Times</i>	1987	Mon. - Fri.	4,250	4,250	4,250
			Sun.	4,500	4,500	4,500
McPherson	<i>McPherson Sentinel</i>	1887	Tues. - Sat.	4,200	4,200	3,600
Manhattan	<i>The Manhattan Mercury</i>	1884	Mon. - Fri.	8,300	8,300	8,021
			Sun.	9,804	9,804	9,048
Newton	<i>The Newton Kansan</i>	1872	Mon. - Sun.	7,513	7,513	7,513
Olathe	<i>The Olathe News</i>	1861	Tues. - Sat.	-	-	-
Ottawa	<i>The Ottawa Herald</i>	1869	Tues. - Fri.	4,500	4,500	-
			Sat.	4,750	4,750	-
Parsons	<i>Parsons Sun</i>	1871	Mon. - Sun.	5,420	5,420	5,420
Pittsburg	<i>The Morning Sun</i>	1887	Tues. - Fri.	10,312	10,312	5,500
			Sat.	10,312	10,312	5,900
			Sun.	9,300	9,300	6,000
Pratt	<i>The Pratt Tribune</i>	1917	Mon. - Fri.	2,000	2,000	-
Salina	<i>The Salina Journal</i>	1871	Mon. - Sat.	24,124	24,124	20,978
			Sun.	24,934	24,934	21,986

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Topeka	<i>The Topeka Capital-Journal</i>	1879	Mon. - Fri.	33,425	33,425	21,689
			Sat.	34,217	34,217	22,462
			Sun.	41,344	41,344	27,882
Wellington	<i>Wellington Daily News</i>	1901	Wed.	2,100	2,100	-
Wichita	<i>The Wichita Eagle</i>	1872	Mon. - Fri.	67,003	67,003	46,899
			Sat.	76,484	76,484	49,437
			Sun.	100,199	100,199	71,768
Winfield	<i>Winfield Daily Courier</i>	1871	Tues. - Sat.	4,522	4,522	4,522

Source: Editor & Publisher, *E & P International Data Book*, U.S. Daily Newspapers, various editions; *History of Kansas Newspapers*, Kansas State Historical Society, 1916.

* Refers to the days of the week published in the most recent published year.

Single dash (-) indicates not available.

Double dash (-) indicated not published/not applicable.

County	Annual Amount Spent on Publishing Information in Newspapers (2014)				
Allen	\$15,850.14				
Anderson	\$4,541.00				
Atchison	\$16,706.86				
Barber	\$4,890.00				
Barton	\$38,858.24				
Bourbon	\$10,828.88				
Brown					
Butler	\$65,114.73				
Chase	\$6,054.17				
Chautauqua					
Cherokee					
Cheyenne	\$9,000.00				
Clark	\$5,756.85				
Clay					
Cloud					
Coffey	\$37,982.89				
Comanche					
Cowley	\$27,118.42				
Crawford	\$40,000.00				
Decatur	\$18,064.37				
Dickinson	\$13,838.89				
Doniphan	\$15,598.00				
Douglas	\$53,358.00				
Edwards	\$1,900.00				
Elk	\$5,000.00				
Ellis	\$25,986.17				
Ellsworth	\$10,397.00				
Finney	\$21,670.65				
Ford	\$131.30				
Franklin	\$48,270.39				
Geary	\$52,000.00				
Gove					
Graham	\$9,295.40				
Grant	\$13,480.44				
Gray	\$10,734.96				
Greeley					
Greenwood					
Hamilton	\$3,901.44				
Harper	\$5,000.00				
Harvey	\$19,026.00				
Haskell	\$2,113.20				
Hodgeman	\$6,000.00				
Jackson	\$22,662.00				

Jefferson	\$19,384.26			
Jewell				
Johnson	\$152,853.00			
Kearny				
Kingman				
Kiowa				
Labette	\$33,114.59			
Lane				
Leavenworth	\$12,048.22			
Lincoln				
Linn				
Logan	\$6,500.00			
Lyon	\$24,000.00			
Marion				
Marshall				
McPherson	\$6,400.00			
Meade	\$9,050.00			
Miami	\$37,824.62			
Mitchell	\$7,957.22			
Montgomery				
Morris				
Morton	\$5,914.93			
Nemaha	9,957.63			
Neosho	\$27,328.69			
Ness	\$7,000.00			
Norton				
Osage	\$21,280.00			
Osborne	\$9,267.93			
Ottawa				
Pawnee	\$21,466.13			
Phillips	\$4,500.00			
Pottawatomie	\$22,276.95			
Pratt				
Rawlins				
Reno				
Republic				
Rice	\$17,758.30			
Riley	\$49,440.56			
Rooks	\$17,933.76			
Rush				
Russell	\$8,759.20			
Saline	\$84,712.00			
Scott	\$5,335.35			
Sedgwick	\$125,361.00			
Seward				
Shawnee	\$63,024.00			
Sheridan				

