

TESTIMONY

TO: SENATE ASSESSMENT AND TAXATION COMMITTEE

**FROM: SCOTT HEIDNER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
AMERICAN COUNCIL OF ENGINEERING COMPANIES OF KANSAS**

RE: SB 167

DATE: MARCH 16, 2017

Madam Chair, members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony today. My name is Scott Heidner and I serve as the Executive Director of the American Council of Engineering Companies of Kansas (ACEC Kansas). ACEC Kansas is the trade association representing private consulting engineering companies in Kansas.

We are here today in support of SB 167, which helps roll back the requirements for elections when local units of government increase taxes by more than the rate of inflation. While we understand the desire to limit spending, the limitations imposed on local governments by this requirement are counterproductive.

Our interests focus most obviously on local infrastructure spending. Infrastructure spending doesn't always increase/decrease at a steady and consistent rate. Large projects can create a short-term increase in spending that far exceeds inflation. Other years without any such projects may see a change in infrastructure spending far below the inflation rate. Local governments need the ability to accommodate these swings to ensure their constituents get the infrastructure they need, when they need it.

Local elected officials should be trusted to enact tax policy that reflects the wishes of their constituents. Just like state elected officials, they can and probably will be removed if they promote tax policies that do not reflect the views of their voters. SB 167 is a positive step in empowering local officials to independently judge the needs of their constituents and create tax policy accordingly.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our comments with the Committee.