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**Testimony to the Senate Transportation Committee
In Support of HB2076
March 7, 2017**

Chairman Petersen and Committee Members,

There is no question the strengthening of the seatbelt laws several years ago has been a part of the successful reduction of fatalities and serious injuries in Kansas. But there is still work to be done. This bill is the next step in further reducing this unnecessary loss of life and devastating injuries which too often lead to long term or permanent disabilities.

This bill focuses on the safety of our driving age children. This bill represents a well balanced approach focusing on a proven Kansas born high school safety program, SAFE (Seatbelts Are For Everyone). SAFE is aimed at teen drivers, generally of high school age. The program has proven effective in increasing seatbelt usage and reducing teen fatalities and disabling injuries in areas where it has been adopted. The passage of this bill will expand the SAFE Program into as many high schools in Kansas as possible and continue the program in currently participating schools. The bill moderately increases the fine for adult seatbelt violations. These additional fine receipts are then diverted into a fund to support the SAFE program.

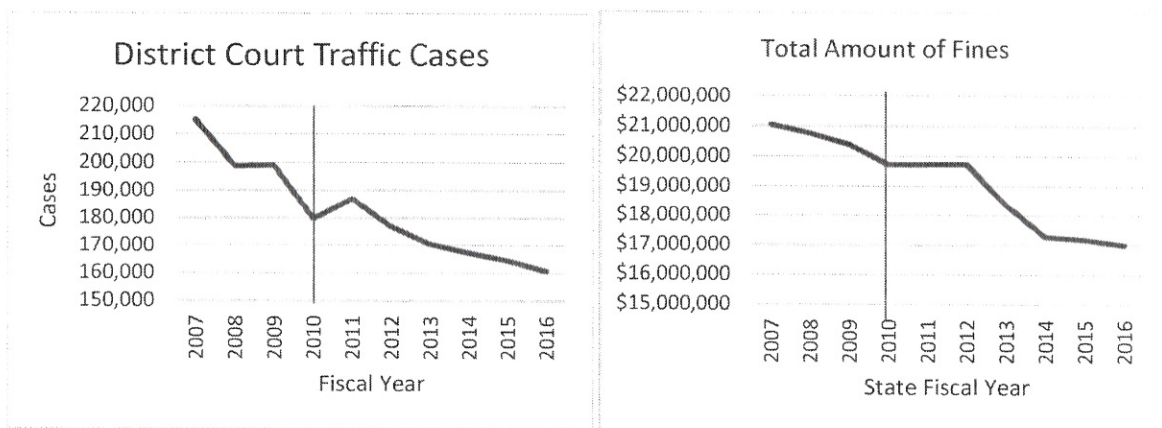
The proposed \$30 fine is consistent with many other states and this bill retains the no court cost provision. The higher fine will not only fund the expanded SAFE program, but there is no doubt the higher fine will also positively impact adult seatbelt compliance, further reducing deaths and serious injuries.

I know some agencies are always concerned when they see the percentage of fund distribution in KSA 74-7336 (Section 4 of the bill) is lowered. I have been involved in two other agencies with funds listed in KSA 74-7336 and with previous changes to the percentages. Those changes always cause the funded agencies some discomfort and I would like to explain how the amended percentages are determined. It is not an easy process to understand.

The Office of Judicial Administration has a method of calculating an estimate of the effect of changes to any of the fines or addition of new funds to the statute. Those calculations include projected increases in fines, such as proposed in this bill. That process projects the adjustments

in the percentages of all funds necessary to hold each fund harmless from the effects of the proposed changes. It does not attempt to address diminishing funding from overall ticket and fine reductions. That is where the new percentages come from. For the EMS fund the FY2016 estimate was \$388,267 and the new 2.23% rate is estimated to produce \$388,282, a \$15 increase.

All the agencies have seen a steady decline in funding from this source for over ten years. Those fund declines have nothing to do with changes in the statutory percentages. It is a function of the decreasing number of traffic cases filed in the district court. In the last ten years the number of traffic cases has pretty steadily declined, 25.39% over the ten-year period. That means fewer fine dollars and thus fewer dollars to each of our listed funds. Total fines collected are down 19.5%. Agencies that need adjustments because of these decreases should seek them in a separate bill. That is not the purpose of this bill.



That is way too much talk about the money side of this bill. The reality is we hope it does result in higher seatbelt usage which will mean fewer seat belt violations. That is the whole intent of the training effort. But in exchange for that reduction in fines we are confident there will be a reduction in death and disabilities of our young people. For our associations and for the agencies on the funding list I am a part of, saved lives over a small drop in funding (if that does occur) is a tradeoff we can accept.

We encourage the committee to pass HB2076 favorably.

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