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Good morning Chairman Peterson and Committee members,

My name is Chris Mills and I represent the men and women of the Johnson County Sheriff's Office. On September 11th, 2016, my whole world changed. It began with frantic radio calls of a dispatcher checking on a deputy who I knew was on a traffic stop. Shortly thereafter, I learned the Overland Park Police Department was receiving calls about a fire and explosion which possibly involved 1115, Master Deputy Brandon Collins' unit number that morning. Brandon wasn't answering his radio or his phone.

I raced to his location as fast as my patrol vehicle would travel. I feared the worst, but prayed he was only injured and could not communicate at the time. Upon arrival, I saw my close friend and colleague's body was severely maimed and burned beyond recognition. It is a scene that I will never be able to erase from my mind.

Even now, the loss of Brandon and the concern I share for his family are constantly on my mind. I was fortunate that my last conversation with Brandon was about three hours before his death. We spoke about family, past experiences together, and even made plans for the future. Had I known it was going to be the last time we spoke, I would have said so much more.

Brandon was an amazing person. He was kind, extremely funny, humble and inquisitive. He took his professional responsibilities seriously, and always strived to be the best he could be. Brandon was the only friend I have ever had that I can honestly say I never had a quarrel with. The day after his death someone told me these kind of tragedies always seem to happen to the best people. In this instance, that was definitely the case.

Brandon left behind his beloved wife Traci, who was his high school sweetheart, and their two wonderful daughters, Ashlee and Lily. Brandon's entire family is still learning to cope with his tragic and senseless loss. I believe there is an emptiness for those that knew and loved Brandon, one that will never be able to be filled.

Brandon's name is now forever etched into the Kansas Law Enforcement Memorial here in Topeka and the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington, D.C. I think it would also be appropriate to honor Brandon's ultimate sacrifice by re-naming a stretch of U.S. 69 Highway, in southern Johnson County, the Master Deputy Brandon Collins Memorial Highway.

Again, I want to thank you Chairman Peterson and the committee members for allowing me this opportunity to speak and I urge you to approve this legislation.