

To: Senate Utilities Committee

From: Erik Sartorius, Executive Director

Date: February 28, 2018

RE: Neutral Testimony on Senate Bill 420

The League of Kansas Municipalities appreciates the opportunity to offer neutral testimony on Senate Bill 420. We know that Kansans expect a reliable and responsive 911 system. The legislation as drafted attempts to meet those expectations, but also includes significant changes to the E911 program.

The League has long supported the state having a strong, locally-driven 911 system. Previously, we worked with the legislature and stakeholders on E911 legislation in 1994, 2004, and 2011. Those efforts were marked by significant collaboration to craft legislation that had input from all stakeholders. The process producing Senate Bill 420 has had less of that collaboration, and we believe some aspects of the bill are not quite “fully cooked.”

The majority of Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) are housed within county operations. However, about 24 PSAPs are run by cities—primarily in smaller communities. Several of these programs are using greater amounts of general fund monies from the cities to continue to meet operations requirements. SB 420 does increase from \$50,000 to \$60,000 (the first increase since the initial enactment of the legislation) the minimum annual funding to PSAPs. That is a welcome change.

Some concerns exist for our members as to how civil penalties may be imposed by the 911 Coordinating Council, and how they may be appealed. Historically, 911 service has been an area where collaboration has been the most beneficial approach. We do not want to see the provision of 911 service become engulfed in an environment of distrust and punitive actions, and suggest that language in these areas could use additional work.

We all know that technological improvements come with a price tag. SB 420 increases the monthly fee for 911 from \$.53 to \$.90. In the grand scheme of living expenses, an additional \$.37 per month to ensure access to 911 services seems like a bargain. The League does understand that, as a percentage, the increase may seem large, and we leave it to the committee to decide whether the increase should occur over more than one year.

Many of the elements of Senate Bill 420 make complete sense. There remain some areas, however, where we believe stakeholders could work with the 911 Coordinating Council to improve the bill. We ask that the committee consider carefully the bill as written and encourage all stakeholders to work written.