



BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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February 19, 2020

The Honorable Chair Steven Johnson
House Taxation
Capitol Building, Room 112-N
Topeka, KS 66612

Re: Written Testimony in Opposition to HB 2440

Dear Chair Johnson and Members of the Committee:

On behalf of a unanimous Board of Riley County Commissioners, please accept this written testimony in opposition to HB 2440.

Currently, county appraisers statewide must be appointed by their county commissioners. Every appointment is for a 4-year term. That system has worked well in Riley County for many years. We've seen no data suggesting county commissions across the state are not competent to make these appointments. So in the absence of objective statewide data showing county commissioners are unqualified to appoint their county appraisers, there is no logical reason to abandon the existing process.

During every county appraiser's 4-year term, their job performance is evaluated not only by the county commission which made the appointment. In addition to county commission oversight, the state Property Valuation Division (PVD) applies objective mathematical measurements, drawn from the local market, to all appraised values the county appraiser assigns to all forms of property. This dual and direct performance supervision encourages county appraisers to meet PVD's objective standards of performance, in order to retain their jobs. If the county appraiser doesn't meet those objective standards, PVD can assume control of that county appraiser's office. And PVD can do so at any time during a county appraiser's 4-year term. In contrast, HB 2440 has the very real possibility of injecting the worst form of political self-interest into the present system. Why create the possibility an elected county appraiser might be tempted to base their appraised values upon political concerns? Why create the possibility of even the appearance appraised values are not market-based, but are instead based upon the county appraiser's favored treatment of political supporters? We believe the present system of dual objective performance evaluation of county appraisers best serves the interests of the state and local government.

Counsel has advised us HB 2440 likely removes the ability of every county commission to control the budget of its appraiser's office. Currently, all county commissions have complete control of the budgets of their appraisers' offices. If that local financial control of a county office is lost by virtue of HB 2440, it is reason enough, standing alone, to oppose this bill.

On behalf of a unanimous Riley County Commission, thank you for allowing us to voice our opposition to HB 2440.

Sincerely,


Marvin Rodriguez, Chairman

cc: John Ford, Vice Chairman
Ronald E. Wells, Member