

Feb 7,2020

Madam Chair, members of this committee,

My name is Rick James County Commissioner for the 1<sup>st</sup> District of Linn County. I am here to show my support for Senate Bill 294. There are many ways to tackle the battle concerning rising property tax. Some want to control it by changing the way we appraise property. Others may want PVD to use a different formula to calculate it. There are many other thoughts on how to control or correct this issue, but Senate Bill 294 has an easy solution, it holds us elected officials accountable to the public.

Senate bill 294 is simple in the fact that if passed, obligates City and County elected officials to publicly vote on any certified rate of tax increase. No more accepting automatic increases without officially notifying our residents or by voting on a budget obligating an entire amount for the next year, which is misleading to our citizens. This bill would require public notification and the opportunity of clarifying by virtue of a vote, from our elected officials in the event these increases are imperative for cities and counties to continue to operate. It brings checks and balances without further complicating the whole taxing process. It does this without changing how property is currently appraised or adding some additional layer of bureaucracy that would no doubt further burden us Kansans.

For the last several months Senator Tyson assembled a team of businesspeople, appraisers and elected officials that worked diligently to come up with a solution and provide some accountability to this growing concern from our taxpayers. As a county commissioner I deal with this issue on a regular basis. Some of the people that it greatly affects are Seniors on fixed incomes and their taxes continuously rise without explanation. We're putting them in unnecessary positions, some are having to make tough financial choices. It affects families paying on home loans with yearly increases to their escrow accounts because of rising taxes. It impacts home buyers and sellers in property transactions. We need to get a handle on it before we create a crisis like one the counties in Missouri which is now receiving national attention.

I would ask you to consider amending the notification requirement for mandatory mailings which is costly, to instead require notification by local newspaper, social media and organizational website postings. I support this bill and ask you to vote to approve it. Thank you.

Rick James