

January 30, 2020

Written Testimony to Senate Ethics, Elections and Local Government Committee
Honorable Chair, Senator Elaine Bowers
Randi Walters, Committee Assistant
785-296-7389, Room 142-S, State Capitol Building

Re: Proponent for SB248 & SB296 Advancing from Committee

Dear Honorable Committee Members,

I am writing as a fellow Kansan in support of SB248 and SB296. I would like to give my experience on why both of these bills would be appropriate amendments to current statute.

I live in unincorporated Leavenworth County having moved from Kansas City, Kansas three years ago. In recent years, it became apparent that the city of Basehor is very anxious to grow. To do so the city attempted to utilize current state statute to expand their governing boundaries besides formal annexation. In my understanding of the current statutes on urban growth, they used current statutes to request zoning and planning rights roughly 3 miles in every direction from every formal city boundary from Leavenworth County government. Their justification was to plan for growth, but to myself and rural neighbors this was an extreme overreach in the intent of the statutes.

I completely understand and accept good governance for municipal growth. I hope that counties and cities work together to properly execute long term plans. But what happened in Basehor and Leavenworth County in recent years is not that. Over the years affected property owners were often left to community outreach to understand the proposed zoning and planning regulations up for vote. Frequently, rural citizens attending Basehor City council meetings advocated against those planning and zoning proposals because they would negatively impact them. The proposals were coming from a government and elected officials **they would not be able to vote for.**

Rural citizens and Basehor city residents came together to express dissatisfaction with the Basehor Urban Growth Management Act (UGMA) and the proposal was tabled before it ever came to the Leavenworth Board of County Commissioners for a vote. But it's not gone forever, and as a result rural citizens have formed a better communication group to prevent such overreach from quietly happening again.

I am in favor of SB248 because having written legislation explicitly requiring mailed correspondence from city government to property owners of potential UGMA plans allows all parties to know what legal changes may occur to them and their property. My only amendment hope to SB248 is that it be Certified Mail so that any government who wishes to pretend correspondence must have "gotten lost in the mail" wouldn't ever be a possibility. Those who think that would be an inappropriate financial cost should then consider if the amount of property a city is trying to obtain, as it might possibly too large.

Citizens should know when a government wants to assume control of their property for city planning especially when those rural citizens **have no elective recourse to vote for said officials.**

I also support SB296 because while citizens must always be active in their government, the one year requirement of similar city UGMA proposals won't slip by quietly in some council meeting unbeknownst until after the fact when they thought the issue was just defeated.

I live in unincorporated Leavenworth County. I vote for county officials who govern our area. I *cannot* vote for city councils or mayors. And the fact that UGMA statues allows cities to govern citizens and properties where those people have absolutely no voting recourse on those determine what people can do with their property is baffling and extremely scary. While that concern is not the business of this particular session it is my belief SB248 and SB296 add appropriate tools for citizens to be informed and protect their property rights from municipal overreach.

I would like to thank my Senator, Senator Tom Holland, for bringing this proposed legislation to your committee and hope that you find my thoughts and those of my neighbors prudent for these bills to advance from your Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to write in my testimony and would gladly answer any additional questions.

Thank you for your time,



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