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Testimony to the House Committee on Judiciary
In Support of Senate Bill 419
March 9, 2022
Written Only Testimony

Chairperson Patton and Members of the Committee:

The Kansas Commission on Peace Officers' Standards and training (CPOST) is responsible for regulating the law enforcement profession in Kansas. CPOST is committed to providing the citizens of Kansas with qualified, trained, ethical, competent, and professional peace officers. It is also dedicated to adopting and enforcing professional standards for certification of peace officers to promote public safety and preserve public trust and confidence. CPOST adopts and enforces rules and regulations that are necessary to ensure that law enforcement officers are adequately certified, trained, and decertified when appropriate. CPOST also conducts administrative investigations related to law enforcement officer qualifications and misconduct. CPOST derives its authority and jurisdiction from the Kansas Law Enforcement Training Act (KLETA), K.S.A. 74-5601, *et seq.*

SB 419 amends the definition of law enforcement officer under the KLETA to include Special Agents of the Kansas Department of Corrections (KDOC). These individuals conduct criminal investigations, are responsible for parole absconder apprehension, and operate in fugitive task forces across the State. In doing so, KDOC Special Agents frequently partner with local, county, state, and federal law enforcement agencies. As such, comprehensive, thorough, and consistent training for these KDOC employees is necessary for the safety of the public, the safety of the inmates in the care of the KDOC, and the safety of law enforcement officers partnering with the KDOC. Along with ensuring adequate basic training, SB 419 will require KDOC Special Agents to meet minimum requirements for certification, receive annual in-service training, receive training on racial or other biased-based policing, and successfully qualify on the CPOST course of fire annually.

Although the duties of KDOC Special Agents are often identical to the those of other law enforcement officers currently regulated by CPOST, these KDOC employees do not currently receive comparable training. Therefore, CPOST supports the passage of SB 419, as written.

Respectfully submitted,
Executive Director Doug Schroeder
Kansas Commission on Peace Officers' Standards and Training